

MORMON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ON MARRIAGE: MONOGAMY & POLYGAMY,
1830-1904

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Abstract

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Marriage has been a defining aspect of civilized society. What are the teachings of marriage according to Mormon theology? What did Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, and other Church leaders who followed him say about plural marriage? Contemporary Western society frowns on the practice of plural marriage. Mormons suffered persecution because of their adoption of polygamy in the nineteenth century. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the historical religious education system of Mormon marriage culture. Historically the Mormon marriage system went through cultural modifications. Can Mormon marriage religious education evolve again? What is the history and development of religious education within the context of Mormonism regarding marriage and specifically plural marriage?

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Introduction:

My objective for researching the teachings of Mormonism regarding marriage is to get as close to the teachings of Joseph Smith or one of his close associates as possible and compare that with the changing times and circumstances in the Mormon context. Ultimately, I will be seeking traditional Mormon tenets from the earliest period to help understand contemporary Mormon theology on marriage. My main objective will be to understand the role that religious education played in Smith's time, how it has changed, and the role it continues to play now. I will base my findings and interpretations on the historical record of nineteenth century religious marriage culture of the Mormon faith tradition. I will examine Mormonism's marriage history from the time of its founder Joseph Smith to the ending of Latter-day Saint plural marriage custom around the turn of the twentieth century during the Joseph F. Smith era. Perhaps by doing so, an accurate depiction of the effect that religious education has had on the Mormon marriage culture will be evident. A breakdown of each chapter will be helpful to determine the roadmap for this project.

The first chapter of this project covers the Mormon historical perspective on polygamy as an outgrowth of monogamy from 1820 to 1844. It will focus on the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, and a few close associates who he introduced into the practice. The number of Smith's wives varies depending on the Mormon scholar to which one refers. One of the challenges of this project is that documentation of early Mormon polygamy is scant because Joseph Smith feared persecution or even death if he allowed his ideas on plural marriage to go public. Smith was not only worried about the actions of non-Mormons if they discovered his privately held views on marriage, but he feared reprisals from his own flock as well, including some of those closest to him. For that reason, Joseph Smith was very judicious and careful about

whom he entrusted with his most secretive notions on marriage.¹ However, divulge them he must because in Smith's mind he was commanded by God to introduce the concept of polygamy to his followers and then put it into practice for those he felt were ready. Moreover, this chapter details the genesis of Mormonism, the basis for polygamy within the religion, and the religious education marriage system that supported the advancement of polygamy. The chapter will detail individual accounts of those introduced to the polygamous practice by Smith and how he educated them on the topic. This chapter also highlights any dissension, backlash, or support for the practice of polygamy from those Smith taught and others.

The second chapter delves into the general history of the LDS Church—specifically on marriage and polygamy during the Utah years, 1847 to 1890. It will examine religious education of marriage practices in the context of Mormonism following the murder of its founder, Joseph Smith. It is an analysis of Joseph Smith's close associates and their respective relationships with their wives. I will seek a few examples of lesser-known Mormon polygamists during that time period up until 1890 as well. This time period was one of official persecution from the US Government. Congress put pressure on the church to discontinue the practice of polygamy. It wasn't until 1890, following years of persecution, that Wilford Woodruff, the top Mormon leader, claimed revelation from God to discontinue the practice of plural marriage for Mormons.²

Though the historical perspective of this era has undoubtedly changed over time to reflect contemporary values and attitudes, I have explored Mormonism's earliest historical writings in order to glean the information needed for this project. I have examined nineteenth century

¹*The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, Inc., 2013), Section 132.

² Woodruff, Wilford, "Official Declaration 1," in *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, Inc., 2013) www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/od/1. Wilford Woodruff's Official Declaration terminated the LDS practice of plural marriage.

sermons given from the pulpit in Salt Lake City, Utah as published in the *Journal of Discourses* (*JD*). In addition, personal journals of those involved in polygamy of the period should reveal important aspects of religious education on marriage at the time as well.

The third chapter will examine the period directly after Mormon polygamy officially ended, between 1890 and 1952. This period is often referred to by Mormons as the post-manifesto period. President Joseph F. Smith was under tremendous pressure by the United States federal government during the 1904-1907 Reed Smoot Senate hearings to end the last vestiges of polygamy within the Church. Smith's removal of high-ranking Mormon Apostles who violated the 1890 Manifesto decree helped to move the Church into modernity, and perhaps saved the Church from disenfranchisement. Some historians claim that while under oath Joseph F. Smith lied. It was a precarious situation in which the federal government placed Smith, but somehow, he was able to propel the church forward.

One author said that Joseph F. Smith's public denials of plural marriages with his knowledge after the Manifesto caused one post-Manifesto plural wife to doubt the validity of her own marriage.³ If Joseph F. Smith deceived members during the Smoot hearings, as some critics suggest, how can the faithful Latter-day Saint rationalize this apparent discrepancy within the context of modern day standards of honesty? Through all of this we will discover how religious education shaped the practice of polygamy as well as the understanding of modern marriage culture among Mormons today. As we understand how Smith taught, and how his successors

³ Flake, Kathleen, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 134.

emulated his teachings we can begin to understand the role that religious education on the subject of marriage has played in the Mormon religion.

Chapter One: Mormon Founder Joseph Smith

How did popular American religion and culture affect major beliefs and values related to Joseph Smith and his new Mormon religion?⁴ Puritanism was a form of the doctrine taught by sixteenth century reformer John Calvin. Smith and many of his followers hailed from New England, where Puritan ideals flourished. New England's Puritanism had added their own unique dogma to Calvinism. Like Puritanism, Mormonism "advocated a close personal God, its providential view of history and its gospel of works."⁵ Conversely, John Calvin embraced the notion of salvation through the grace of God alone, and that God pre-chose those who would be saved and those who would be damned.⁶ In other words, each individual was predestined to their own fate or reward. After the Revolutionary War, however, new political and philosophical ideas started to take shape in the American Colonies. Orthodox Calvinism was being challenged by not only irreligious patriots, but by Christian ministers. A group of ministers argued that Calvinism taught ideas that were not supported by scripture and that "it was dangerous to believe that God saved men arbitrarily. What good were human strivings?"⁷

In the 17th century, a European protestant minister, Jacobus Arminius, attacked the ideas of Calvin specifically on the notion of predestination. Arminius taught that an individual's personal choices were based on the principle of free will and that free choice would have some

⁴ David Brion Davis, "New England Origins of Mormonism," in *Mormonism and American Culture*. eds. Marvin S. Hill and James B. Allen (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 14.

⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁶ Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 56-57.

⁷ Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 26-29.

effect on one's salvation. In the 1790's, New England was a haven for these ideas. The revivalist preachers did not deny the orthodox position, they simply, "stressed man's ability and his responsibility in regard to his spiritual condition and conveyed the idea of human freedom... 'Works'... was given a new emphasis and predestination was allowed to slip into the background."⁸

Joseph Smith Jr's grandfather, Asael Smith, was one such person that was affected by Arminius' ideas. He taught his children to avoid denominational religion and instead to search the scriptures using sound reason.⁹ Joseph Smith Sr, father to the Prophet, was the only son of Asael Smith to refrain from joining organized religion.¹⁰ Shortly after his marriage to Lucy Mack in 1796, Joseph Sr moved his young family to upstate New York, near Palmyra, seeking a better livelihood. The religious revivals were common place in this area.¹¹ In fact, religious fervency was so high that the area was referred to "as the 'burned over district' subject to repeated fires of revival."¹² The various sects were in competition with one another and revival ministers often debated on doctrinal issues. As a young boy growing up, Joseph Smith listened to many of the religious ideas of the culture and was undoubtedly influenced by what he heard. Some scholars believe that early Mormons were simply a radical form of American religious culture; a product of Jacksonian American thought. The Second Great Awakening was a Protestant religious revival that took place in the United States between 1790 and the late 1850s.

⁸ Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 16-17.

⁹ Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 1-2.

¹⁰ Bushman, *Joseph Smith and The Beginnings of Mormonism*, 28-29.

¹¹ Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 4-5.

¹² Richard N. Ostling and Joan K. Ostling, *Mormon America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 20-21.

This Awakening reflected Romanticism which depicted spiritual enthusiasm, emotion, and the supernatural. The revivals led to the formation of new denominations and the establishment of many reform movements intended to solve societal evils prior to the millennial reign of Jesus Christ.¹³ This was the cultural atmosphere in which Mormonism emerged. It might be important to understand how Americans viewed the family during the emergence of Mormonism.

The Victorian era was the period during Queen Victoria's reign approximately from 1837 until her death in 1901. A Victorian nuclear family is described during this time as a family consisting of two parents (male and female) and one or more children. This type of family was thought of as an example of "refined sensibilities." It is in contrast to a single-parent family, the extended family with more than two parents, same-sex parents and of course any other definition of family such as polygamous. The Nuclear family definition may vary depending on who one asked during this time period.¹⁴ Understanding American marriage culture in Joseph Smith's day will help us realize why Mormon marriage culture was so difficult to accept by their neighbors.

First Marriage: Emma (Hale) Smith

The LDS Church was organized on April 6, 1830. Approximately a year later, June 1831, Joseph Smith directed two prominent elders, William W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery, to begin printing, selecting, and writing books for religious education of its members. Mormonism had not yet developed its own tradition. Hence, Smith's followers had to rely upon his teachings to establish their own unique traditions from Smith's revelations and interpretations of scripture.

¹³ Butler, *Religion in American Life*, 188-224.

¹⁴ "Victorian Era," *Wikipedia*, last modified June 3, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_era#, Population; Nuclear Family, *Wikipedia*, last modified June 11, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_family.

Although Smith's teachings reflected Mormon rejection of many tenets of traditional Christianity, it is unlikely that the tenets of plural marriage made their way into early print outside of the revelation on marriage¹⁵ and his personal letters to individual members. Because plural marriage was a clandestine practice in early Mormonism, we are forced to rely on written revelation, letters, and personal conversations via journals of individual participants to discover Mormon teachings on marriage. Smith was no fool, he felt sure that by revealing the principles of plural marriage to the entire community it would cause increased persecution and ultimately the collapse of his church. Since he resorted to sharing his most "explosive" doctrine, plural marriage, exclusively with his trusted inner circle, we will begin there. How did the teachings of marriage become an important element in Mormon Theology? Let's look first at Mormon founder, Joseph Smith's, marriage experience.

Joseph Smith met his first wife, Emma Hale, when he boarded at her father's home where she lived in October 1825. Smith and his family were poor and compounding their circumstances, his older brother Alvin whom they depended on financially passed away unexpectedly. Smith had a reputation for finding treasure due to the story floating around that he discovered Gold Plates. A wealthy landowner named "Josiah Stowel who lived in Chenango County, state of New York" hired the Smith's to dig for a "silver mine." Stowel believed Spanish explorers abandoned it on his property in Harmony, Pennsylvania.¹⁶

The enterprise proved to be a waste of time for all parties involved. However, it was not entirely without benefit from Smith's perspective, since he fell in love with Emma Hale while

¹⁵ D&C, 132.

¹⁶ Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Edited by B.H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1980), 1:16-17; Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling; A Cultural Biography of Mormonism's Founder* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 48-54.

living in Harmony. He boarded with the Hale's during the time he was employed with Stowel. Like some romantic relationships, love comes with challenges. Emma's father, Isaac Hale, did not like his daughter's choice of suitors. Like some fathers, Hale was opposed to them getting married because he thought his daughter could do better. Hale was opposed to Smith's choice of employment as a treasure hunter. In other words, he wanted Smith to "get a real job" instead of being a "money digger." Because the couple failed to get Hales' blessing, they did what other couples in love have done from time immemorial; they eloped. Emma Hale was two years his senior when she married Smith at age twenty-two on January 18, 1827 in a civil ceremony.¹⁷ Civil ceremonies are perfectly acceptable in Mormon theology. However, eventually Joseph Smith adopted a marriage custom from the eastern hemisphere that shocked many in America including his own wife. In addition, his marriage custom had eternal ramifications.

Origin of the Practice of Mormon Marriage

In the modern world, Traditional Christianity accepts both Old and New Testaments of the Bible as the official and inerrant word of God handed down through all generations of time from the time of Adam and Eve until the apostolic period ended after the first one hundred years of Christianity. Joseph Smith and his disciples rejected the concept that today's Bible was entirely the same scripture as penned by Christ's disciples. Mormons believe Christian scripture was tampered with, replaced and in some cases manufactured by uninspired men who were not authorized by God once the disciples of Jesus Christ were killed. Therefore, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church or Mormon Church) claims to be a restoration of lost truths once pronounced from the original Bible manuscript. The Church was organized by Joseph Smith and a few of his associates on April 6, 1830. As early as December of that same year,

¹⁷ Joseph Smith, *Church History*, 1:17; Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 48-54.

followers of Smith had been discussing the topic of lost Bible books. After completing the translation of The Book of Mormon in 1830, Smith began a retranslation of the King James Bible. Much conversation over these lost books of the Bible were discussed and debated vigorously. In addition, Smith received a revelation on a prophesy of a little-known Old Testament prophet named Enoch. The new information expanded upon the relationship God has with his children, mortal human beings.¹⁸

The “lost books” identified by early Mormon leaders were from the version of the Bible most popular in their day, King James. For instance, in an Old Testament passage King David’s history is described as being found in three books of scripture: the books of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. Christians agree that the life of King David is discussed in the book of Samuel. However, the books of Nathan, and Gad are not represented in our current Old Testament. The history of King Solomon is contained in the book of Nathan and also in the prophecies and visions of Ahijah and Iddo respectively¹⁹ It is not insignificant in Mormon history and revelation that both these Kings in the Old Testament were polygamists. The book of Chronicles mentions that the history of the son of Solomon, King Rehoboam, is written in the book of Shemaiah, another book absent from the Bible.²⁰ Other Old Testament books give descriptions of books or information absent from today’s current Bible.²¹

The early members of the Mormon Church also discovered that the New Testament scriptures referred to Old Testament books or information no longer available to the general

¹⁸ Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:132-139; Richard Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 72-77.

¹⁹ 1 Chron. 29:29 (AV) ; 2 Chron. 9:29 (AV).

²⁰ 2 Chron. 12:15 (AV).

²¹ Sam. 10:25 (AV); 1 Kings 4:32,33 (AV); Smith, *HC* 1:132; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 82-83.

public. According to the book of Galatians the gospel of Jesus Christ was preached to not only Abraham but to Enoch who lived only seven generations from Adam.²² Christian scholars of the day believed God used Moses as his first prophet to write scripture, yet Bible scripture refers to lost scripture and ancient prophets who received revelation prior to Moses. Since our current Old and New Testaments are missing, sometimes entire books of scripture, Latter-day Saints naturally conclude that the Bible is not complete. The absence of books and letters that should have been included in the Bible text but were not has substantial implications for Mormons. The possibility that traditional Christianity did not have access to all Christian doctrine is obviously greater considering this discovery.

These lost books from the Bible have the potential of containing missing Christian doctrine heretofore unable to be preached from the Christian pulpit. Latter-day Saints claim their so-called new doctrine such as polygamy is old doctrine newly discovered. The prophesy of Enoch was thought by Joseph Smith to be so important to humanity that he published parts of it as the book of Moses now contained in the Pearl of Great Price, another book of LDS scripture. The book of Moses was a revelation Joseph Smith claimed to have received from God, the same revelation Moses received upon Mount Sinai. The time of the book of Moses covers a history before the creation, the creation of the world, and the history of God's dealings with mankind from Adam until Noah and the great deluge, "wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water."²³

²² Gal. 3:8 (AV); Jude 1:14-15 (AV).

²³ 1 Pet. 3:20 (AV); Smith, *HC*, 1:133-139. LDS General Authority Bruce R. McConkie further stated, "One of the great heresies of modern Christendom is the unfounded assumption that the Bible contains all of the inspired teachings now extant among men." McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 83.

The Bible revision continued to progress off and on when in September 1831, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon and their families moved to Hiram, Portage County, Ohio. They stayed with the John Johnson family while doing “little else” than revising the King James Bible. Smith gave different renderings and filled in missing parts from the biblical text. Sidney Rigdon acted as Smith’s scribe as Smith dictated the scriptural changes. During this time, Smith received several revelations now contained in the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C), modern LDS scripture. Some of the revelation on plural marriage was obtained while living with the Johnsons.²⁴ This is significant not only because it leaves no doubt that Sidney Rigdon was aware of the doctrine of polygamy, but that two other close associates of Smith must have known as well, Luke and Lyman Johnson. They were sons of John Johnson Sr of whom Smith lived with during this period. Luke and Lyman Johnson would later become two of the original LDS Twelve Apostles. It is interesting to note that members of the Johnson family formed a portion of a mob that tarred and feathered Smith and Rigdon on the evening of March 24, 1832. Eli, Edward and John Johnson Jr are mentioned in Smith’s history at the time of the mobbing as recent apostates to his doctrine. Rumors of polygamy were being bantered about because the Johnsons sister, Nancy Marinda Johnson, was rumored to be a potential wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith.²⁵ By February 1833, Smith and Rigdon completed the revision of the Bible. Smith intended to publish

²⁴ D&C, 132; Smith, *HC*, 1:215-16, 219; *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. and S. W. Richards, 1854-1886), 13:183-196; Bushman, *Joseph Smith, 170-80*, 326; Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 231-32; Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (New York: Double Day & Company, Inc., 1977), 146.

²⁵ Smith, *HC*, 1:260-61; Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 4-6; Hill, *Joseph Smith*, 144-46. Sidney Rigdon, Luke and Lyman Johnson later left the church presumably over the doctrine of Polygamy. Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 237-40; Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 337, 340.

the Bible revision but was unable to because of a lack of financial means and, probably, continued persecution.²⁶ No doubt Mormons and non-Mormons alike tended to reject the notion of practicing plural marriage.

Not all of Smiths closest associates were aware of the doctrine of polygamy. William W. Phelps wrote an article on marriage representing his and many other member's definition of what a marriage should be according to their customs and experience. Among other things, Phelps wrote, "Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again."²⁷ In the absence of Joseph Smith, Phelps presented his "Article on Marriage" not as a revelation, but as his own belief and the belief of many in the LDS community regarding western customs and traditions of marriage. They even included it in modern LDS canon of scripture, the Doctrine & Covenants.²⁸ In light of the marriage revelation to the contrary, Smith must have been painfully surprised upon his return home when he learned that the Saints acted upon this issue without his approval. On the other hand, the members could not be blamed for this oversight, since Smith only told a select few of his followers at that time about the revelation on plural marriage. How could anybody have known what was coming? The issue of polygamy would haunt Latter-day Saints for many years to come.

However, to keep polygamy under control, Smith made very strict rules and regulations regarding who and how to proceed with the practice. For instance, once a member was introduced to the practice of plural marriage they were not allowed to participate of their own

²⁶ Smith, *HC*, 1:324, 341, 369; Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 131-143.

²⁷ Smith, *HC*, 2:247; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 28.

²⁸ Smith, *HC*, 2:246-247; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 28.

volition. All revelation on “taking” additional wives had to be approved by the prophet of the Lord, Joseph Smith. To illustrate this point, High Priest Aaron Lyon claimed to receive a revelation that a Sister Jackson, who was married but whose husband was missing, was to become his wife. Lyon persuaded Jackson that her husband was now dead, which permitted her to remarry. Jackson consented to be his wife, but before the wedding had taken place, her husband returned home. This proved the necessity of waiting upon proper authority before acting in haste. Aaron Lyon was disciplined for abusing his authority in persuading Jackson to marry him. He lost his priesthood authority but retained his membership after acknowledging his faults and asking for forgiveness.²⁹

For some scholars, Smith was inconsistent regarding his teachings on marriage. For example, In May 1838 Joseph Smith published numerous answers to questions he continually received over the course of his ministry to avoid repeating himself. One of the questions stated, “Do the Mormons believe in having more wives than one?” Smith’s answer is perplexing on one level, but completely understandable on another. He answered, “No, not at the same time. But they believe that if their companion dies, they have a right to marry again.”³⁰ It is perplexing because Smith had to know of his intentions to practice plural marriage at this time in church history, which means he intentionally deceived the questioner and the public. Yet, his answer was quite understandable since Smith must have known persecution would follow if he answered in any other way.

Furthermore, Smith had no idea what response the membership of the church would have without preparing his flock for the shock of introducing plural marriage. He simply was not

²⁹ Smith, *HC*, 3:25–26; *JD*, 1:63–65.

³⁰ Smith, *HC*, 3:28.

ready to answer the question in the affirmative. Perhaps the scripture forbidding the weak from receiving “meat before milk”³¹ occupied his thoughts. In addition, Smith may have felt his answer was sufficient since no official revelation regarding plurality of wives had yet been written down. That would not happen until 1843. If that’s the case, Smith gave the only plausible answer that could be given at that period in LDS Church history.

Early Day Teachings and Practices of Polygamy: Hyrum Smith

There is indisputable evidence that Mormon founder, Joseph Smith, not only received the revelation that others later followed to justify the practice of plural marriage, but also participated in its practice. Not many of his fledgling flock initially embraced this ideology without personal struggle and many outright rejected polygamy. Among Smith’s followers who resisted polygamy were his beloved older brother and confidant Hyrum Smith and Joseph’s first wife, Emma Hale Smith. Like many of his followers, Hyrum Smith had great difficulty in breaking from traditional forms of marriage. He could not conceive of a marriage conducted in any other way than strict monogamy, as he had been instructed his entire life by the institutions of Protestantism. However, Hyrum’s first wife, Jerusha, passed away prematurely leaving him with five small children to raise alone. Joseph Smith, the anointed of the Lord, received a revelation that a recent convert and boarder in the Smith home, Mary Fielding, should become his brother’s second wife. “Mary [Fielding] married Hyrum [Smith] on Christmas Eve 1837.”³²

³¹ 1 Cor. 3:2 (AV); *D&C*, 19:22.

³² Leonard J. Arrington, Susan Arrington Madsen, and Emily Madsen Jones, *Mothers of the Prophets*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009), 88-98, 159-74; Mary Fielding Smith is the mother of Joseph F. Smith and Grandmother to Joseph Fielding Smith, the 5th and 9th Presidents of the Church respectively.

Mercy Thompson

Mary Fielding's sister, Mercy Thompson, had married her sweetheart, Robert Thompson, the previous June. The Thompsons often looked after the Smith children when Hyrum was jailed or away and Mary was either sick or visiting Hyrum in jail. The two families remained close through trials and persecutions. A devastating event occurred to the Thompson family when Robert Thompson "passed away unexpectedly in the fall of 1841"³³ from malaria. It was a common occurrence for families to lose someone close to them to premature death prior to the industrial revolution. Mercy Thompson's family was no different. However, according to her diary, Robert was the love of Mercy's life and "[s]he missed him and wanted to be near him."³⁴ Robert Thompson inspired his wife Mercy to be a better person, but now he was gone. The loss of her husband left a terrible void in Mercy Thompson's life and her situation did not seem to be reconcilable.

Furthermore, in the spring of 1843 Mercy had a dream about her late husband, Robert, in which she found herself in a garden with him while an unknown person repeated their wedding vows. Mercy immediately knew the dream was a message from God but was not sure exactly what it meant. A short time later, Hyrum returned home from business and had a dream regarding his deceased wife, Jerusha, and two of their children who had died in infancy. Hyrum too did not comprehend the meaning of the dream. The timing of both dreams did not seem coincidental to either party; what was God telling them? A short time later, Hyrum's brother, the Prophet Joseph Smith, requested to see him as soon as possible. Joseph had received a

³³ Jed Woodworth, "Mercy Thompson and the Revelation on Marriage: *D&C*, 132," in "The Ensign Magazine," January 2, 2015, history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-eternal-marriage.

³⁴ Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson, "Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson, Reminiscence," in *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo*, edited by Carol Cornwall Madsen (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 194-95.

revelation³⁵ that marriage without authority from God was null and void upon the death of either marriage partner. Only one person on the earth at a time held the divine authority (President and Prophet of the Lord's Church, Joseph Smith, his successor or one whom they appoint) to solemnize "a new [marriage] contract. . .for All Eternity."³⁶

The information in the revelation excited those who had lost their mate through premature death including Hyrum Smith and Mercy Thompson. The notion that a marriage could last for eternity had not been seriously considered by many religious institutions due to traditional Christian interpretations on New Testament teachings regarding marriage.³⁷ Previously it was thought that marriage was for mortal beings for procreation on earth only. Joseph Smith expanded that to include eternal marriage partners who would continue to increase their posterity and family relationships into the next life. However, it was conditional upon obedience to all of God's commandments, not just the easy ones but also those that are more difficult to individually accept. Whether one agrees with or likes a commandment is immaterial. Christ in the New Testament taught that certain marriages performed by earthly authority would only last until death.³⁸ However, the revelation on marriage that Joseph Smith taught included other types of marriages performed by divine authority; eternal monogamist as well as polygamist marriage relationships could last for eternity.³⁹

³⁵ *D&C*, 132.

³⁶ Thompson, "Reminiscence," 195. The revelation on marriage was first published as an extra to the September 14, 1852, issue of the *Deseret News*; probably to coincide with the August 29, 1852 announcement on the practice of plural marriage. It became canonized as section 132 of the 1876 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Thompson, "Reminiscence," n14.

³⁷ Matt. 22:23-30 (AV).

³⁸ Matt. 22:30 (AV); Mark 12:25 (AV); *D&C*, 132:16.

³⁹ *D&C*, 132.

If a marriage partner or partners was deceased, the revelation allowed for the ordinance to be performed by proxy. In other words, another person could stand in place of the deceased and be sealed for time and eternity to their spouse or another person standing in the place of the other partner who was also dead “for and in behalf” of the deceased.⁴⁰ Of course, the eternal marriage is only valid if the person who is dead in the world of spirits accepts the marriage for themselves. Agency or the free will of an individual to choose for one’s own self is paramount in Mormon doctrine. An individual is free to choose everything except the consequences and/or blessings for those choices. In May 1843, several couples and individuals in Smith’s inner circle who accepted the revelation as the word of God met in Josephs Smith’s Nauvoo home. Smith performed eternal marriage contracts for not only the living marital partners who were present but for the spouses who were already dead. Included among them were Hyrum and Mary Smith along with Mary’s sister Mercy Thompson, Brigham Young and his wife Mary Ann, and Willard Richard’s and his wife, Jeanetta. Mercy Thompson was sealed to her late husband “for time and eternity, with Hyrum [Smith] standing in for Robert.”⁴¹

Although being sealed to Mercy’s husband brought great comfort and certainty for her and her children for eternity, they still had to continue life on earth without a helpmate. Who would be a protector and provider for the family until the eternal reunion of the Thompson couple? Mercy did the best she could under the circumstances. A widow making a living in nineteenth century America had limited prospects. Also, she was lonely with no earthly partner in mortality. One night, the ghost of Robert Thompson visited Joseph Smith several times permitting him to marry Mercy to Hyrum Smith as a plural wife for earth time only, while Robert and Mercy would remain eternal marriage partners. It was during this time that Joseph

⁴⁰ *D&C*, 132; Thompson, “Reminiscence,” 195.

⁴¹ Thompson, “Reminiscence,” 195.

Smith had the revelation on marriage written down for others to read and to be converted to the notion of plural marriage.⁴²

Emma Smith

Another disciple of Smith's that had difficulty believing in plural marriage was the prophet's wife, Emma Smith. In 1874, William Clayton (scribe for Smith) described how he wrote the revelation on plural marriage as it was dictated by Joseph Smith. He related the following story in a sworn statement to a notary public. Clayton stated he was present when Joseph and Hyrum Smith had a conversation on plural marriage regarding Emma Smith's resistance to the practice thereof. "Hyrum said to Joseph. 'If you will write the revelation on celestial marriage, I will take it and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its truth, and you will hereafter have peace.' Joseph smiled and remarked, 'you do not know Emma as well as I do.'"⁴³

Clayton said the conversation continued until Joseph Smith finally agreed to write the revelation and allow Hyrum Smith to persuade Emma of the truth of polygamy. Joseph Smith had committed the revelation to memory, which is another indication he knew the ideology of plurality of wives well before he committed it to writing in 1843. After Clayton wrote down the revelation as it was dictated by Smith, he had Clayton read it back to him for corrections. Smith indicated he refrained from writing more on the subject, but that the revelation as written was sufficient at that time. Hyrum subsequently read the revelation to Emma and received a very

⁴² *D&C*, 132; Mercy Fielding Thompson letter to Joseph Smith III, September 5, 1883, Joseph F. Smith Papers 1854-1918, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; Thompson, "Reminiscence," n21.

⁴³ Smith, *HC*, 5:xxxii-xxxiv; William Clayton, notarized statement, 1874, p. 5, Bx 11, Fd 14. The Scott G. Kenney Collection: A Register by Stan Larson. Manuscript Collection (Ms 587). Manuscript Division Special Collections University of Utah Marriott Library, Salt Lake City, Utah; Thompson, "Reminiscence," n22.

harsh rebuke from her. Emma Smith utterly rejected the entire concept of polygamy and was very angry and resentful about the experience. The revelation was read to several Church General Authorities throughout the day and with the approval of Smith another copy was made the following day by Joseph C. Kingsbury. Clayton related that Smith allowed Emma to destroy the first copy to pacify her, while the Kingsbury duplicate was preserved by Bishop Newel K. Whitney.⁴⁴

This copy was later included in the Doctrine Covenants as Section 132 on the marriage covenant. In addition, in 1886, Kingsbury issued a sworn statement verifying William Clayton's story. Kingsbury said, "I will add that I also knew that the Prophet Joseph Smith had married other women besides his first wife, Emma; I was well aware of his having married Sarah Ann Whitney, the eldest daughter of Bishop Newel K. Whitney and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, his wife."⁴⁵ Apparently, Smith kept from his first wife, Emma, the fact that he was marrying multiple women and for good reason; Emma simply would not stand for it.

Fanny Alger

Joseph Smith's practice of polygamy has been controversial in nature and it is not known how many wives he actually married. However, there is no question Smith was a polygamist based on the historical evidence. Even one church historian, Andrew Jenson, counted twenty-seven wives of Joseph Smith. For purposes of my research, I will discuss some of the well documented plural wives of Joseph Smith⁴⁶ and how these relationships help us understand the teachings of Mormon marriage. First, Fanny Alger is considered the first plural wife of Joseph

⁴⁴ Smith, *HC*, 5:xxxii-xxxiii; *JD*, 13:194; Janet Peterson and LaRene Gaunt, *Elect Ladies* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1990), 16.

⁴⁵ Smith, *HC* 5:xxxiv; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835-1870* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 76-77.

⁴⁶ Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*, 2nd ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 98.

Smith. He met Alger through her Uncle, Levi Hancock. In the spring of 1832, Smith introduced Levi Hancock to plural marriage with a proposition. He told Hancock that the Lord revealed to him that “righteous men” could marry “righteous women” as plural wives in order to produce a “righteous race.” The reason the Lord gave in instituting this principle was to bypass having to send the “nobles of his kingdom” through a “careless people.”⁴⁷

Soon after Hancock learned of plural marriage he became engaged to a woman, Temperance Jane Miller, without the permission from Smith. Eventually, Hancock felt guilty for not consulting Joseph Smith and confessed his error. One apparent aspect of religious education on marriage was that permission must be granted by the Prophet of the Lord. It does not appear Smith was too upset with Hancock, but simply informed him that the Lord prepared Hancock someone else, “seventeen-year-old Clarissa Reed.” Presumably Hancock broke off his engagement with Temperance Miller. Reed had been a hired hand in the Smith home and was friends with Emma Smith, Joseph’s first wife. Reed expressed a love interest in Levi Hancock and apparently the feeling was mutual once the Prophet introduced the two.

Since Hancock was now part of Smith’s inner circle and held similar authority to marry for time and all eternity, Smith made a “bargain” with him. Smith offered to marry Clarissa Reed to Hancock if he would bring Fanny Alger, Hancock’s niece, to him for a plural wife. Probably because plural marriage was a clandestine practice in early Mormonism, religious education regarding proper conduct in relation to polygamy had to be done privately and to only a few close associates. A pattern seemed to form and whether or not it was intentional is unclear. The Smiths hired women, usually young, for various duties that stayed in their home for months at a time. This enabled the Smiths to become intimately acquainted with each as they taught them the

⁴⁷ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 31-32; Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, 66.

principles of the restored gospel including the “works of Abraham”, polygamy. Apparently, another aspect of education that Smith developed was a kind of quid pro quo system of marriage deal making. Another educational tactic Smith employed was having a trusted family member make the request to the family that Smith desired to marry a woman from the family.

In this case, Levi Hancock agreed and asked his brother in-law, Fanny’s father, Samuel Alger for permission for Smith to marry his daughter. Samuel told him to check with Fanny’s mother, Levi’s sister, who promptly informed Levi to ask Fanny herself. Fanny Alger accepted the offer and both couples were married for time and all eternity, Hancock performing the marriage ceremony for Smith and Alger as dictated by Smith, and next Joseph Smith married Hancock and Reed for eternity. The marriage most likely took place privately in the spring of 1833 before any temple had been built and before the Nauvoo era which was also before Smith’s written revelation on marriage in 1843.⁴⁸ A similar pattern was on display when Louisa Beaman married Smith in Nauvoo on April 1841. Beaman’s brother-in-law, Joseph Bates Noble, asked Beaman to become Smith’s wife on behalf of the prophet. Once the marriage proposal was accepted, Noble performed the wedding for Smith and Beaman, and later Noble was sealed to his plural wife by Smith. Again, this was prior to the completion of the Nauvoo temple and before Smith’s 1843 written revelation on marriage.⁴⁹ It appears Smith rewarded those who complied with his wishes to obtain more wives by also granting their requests for plural wives. In both cases, a kind of quid pro quo relationship developed between the grooms to help convince the respective brides to marry their respective associate. In addition, each of the grooms performed the marriage for the other couple, making their bargain complete.

⁴⁸ D&C, 132.

⁴⁹ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 31-33; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 5-11, 23-24.

Merinda Nancy Johnson Hyde: Orson Hyde

After the Johnson's moved to Kirtland, Ohio in 1833, Marinda began courting Orson Hyde. Hyde converted to Mormonism from the Campbellite ministry in 1831, and proving his loyalty to Joseph Smith, he quickly rose to the top ranks of Mormondom. Sidney Rigdon officiated in the marriage ceremony of Marinda and Orson Hyde in 1834, and shortly thereafter, Hyde was called as one of the first Mormon apostles, along with Marinda's two brothers, Luke and Lyman Johnson. Orson's apostleship took him on many missions resulting in long absences from Marinda and their children. An added burden to the Hyde's was the excommunication of Luke and Lyman Johnson on April 13, 1838.⁵⁰

The Hyde's had migrated for a short time to Missouri in 1838, then to Illinois in 1839. Orson Hyde served a European mission, which included a special assignment to Jerusalem in 1840, where he dedicated that land to the "return of the Jews." While Orson Hyde was away, Joseph Smith took a special interest in Orson's wife, Marinda, and his family by making sure they had the temporal means to exist comfortably. According to historian George D. Smith, "Late in 1841...Joseph instructed Marinda by revelation to obey 'the counsel of my servant Joseph in all things,' a euphemism usually tied to accepting the call to plural marriage."⁵¹

George D. Smith continued by stating that Joseph Smith proposed marriage to Marinda Hyde in December 1841, and sealed her to himself four months later, while Orson Hyde was away on his mission serving the church. Thomas Bullock, scribe to the prophet, wrote in Joseph Smith's diary regarding the marriages of Smith, "Apr 42 Marinda Johnson to Joseph Smith."⁵²

⁵⁰ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 232-233.

⁵¹ Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy*, 117; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 236.

⁵² Smith, *HC*, 117; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 238-239.

From Smith's diary we know that Orson Hyde⁵³ returned from a two-and-a-half-year mission on December 7, 1842. Smith told Hyde of his marriage to his wife, which presumably did not go well. The initial report said Hyde was furious, but he must have gotten over it, because within a year Orson Hyde took two plural wives of his own.⁵⁴ Perhaps Hyde received the news of celestial marriage as a reward for his church service.

As mentioned earlier, Merinda Nancy Johnson probably learned the concept of polygamy as a divine doctrine when Smith and Rigdon stayed at her home in Hiram, Ohio in 1831 when the Bible was revised. We know that a portion of the 1843 revelation on plural marriage⁵⁵ was revealed during that time and that Smith privately educated members of the Johnson family during his stay with them that the doctrine would one day be accepted as restored biblical doctrine. Rumors circulated among the members for several years that Merinda Johnson was a potential wife of Smith. Perhaps he received a revelation early on like other potential wives that Merinda was foreordained before the foundation of the world to be Smith's eternal mate, but that is speculation. However, in December 1841 Smith began teaching religious education regarding plural marriage to Merinda Johnson Hyde, while her husband was away on a mission. The Lord

⁵³ Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy*, 117-18. An earlier incident involving Orson Hyde and another church leader, Thomas B. Marsh caused both to leave the church, no evidence that polygamy played a part in either case. In 1838, in Far West, Missouri, Orson Hyde became sick with a fever. Some have questioned if the sickness affected his mental state. Hyde and Marsh fled the state and church taking their families with them. At the instigation of Marsh, Hyde joined him in signing an affidavit accusing Smith of a planned Mormon "take over" through a force of arms against the state of Missouri. Five months later, Hyde dreamed that he would be a "son of perdition" if he did not repent of his lies about the Prophet. He must have believed in the prophetic calling of Smith and the dream. A "son of perdition" meant having no forgiveness in this life or the life to come, a risk Hyde was unwilling to take. He returned to the church with his family and was accepted into full fellowship. Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 233-238; *JD*, 5:206-09.

⁵⁴ Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy*, 117-18; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 240-249.

⁵⁵ *D&C*, 132.

instructed Merinda to follow the counsel of his prophet Joseph Smith in all things. The revelation promised blessings to not only Merinda, but to her children after her.⁵⁶

The revelation from Smith must have been a powerful motivation because five months later Merinda was sealed to Joseph Smith for all eternity. Also, she went from poverty to her and her children always being taken care of by the church leaders, especially when her husband was away on church business. Orson Hyde returned from his three-year mission to Jerusalem on December 7, 1842. Smith spent the entire day with Hyde working, dining, and undoubtedly teaching religious education on polygamy to Orson Hyde. His wife, Merinda, “was entirely converted to polygamy by this time.” Smith had already spent a considerable amount of time educating Merinda into the practice, and she was now educating other potential plural wives during her husband’s absence. In the coming months, Smith spent much time educating Orson Hyde into the doctrine of plural marriage. Hyde was constantly by Smith’s side as he prepared himself to enter polygamy under the prophet’s tutelage. Although Orson and Merinda would one day divorce, the record indicates that they stayed friends throughout their life time. They raised a large family together while Orson continued to add to his eternal family more and more wives. Merinda looked forward to being with her deceased eternal husband, Joseph Smith.⁵⁷

Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner

As a twelve-year-old young lady in October 1830, Mary Elizabeth Rollins (Lightner Smith Young) was baptized by Parley P. Pratt. Soon, she borrowed a Book of Mormon from community and religious leader Isaac Morley to read. She had just finished the last chapter in the book when Joseph Smith visited her home in Kirtland, Ohio. He was surprised to see her family

⁵⁶ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 235-239.

⁵⁷ Compton, 238-249.

with the book, since it was the only copy available in that part of the country. After hearing of Mary's interest in Mormon scripture, Smith asked to meet her. Mary said of their meeting:

“...when he saw me he looked at me so earnestly, I felt almost afraid. After a moment or two he came and put his hands on my head and gave me a great blessing, the first I ever received, and made me a present of the book, and said he would give Brother Morley another. He came in time to rebuke the evil spirits, and set the church in order. We all felt that he was a man of God, for he spoke with power, and as one having authority in very deed.”⁵⁸

In the fall of 1831, Mary, her family and others relocated to Independence, Jackson County, Missouri. She worked for Lilburn W. Boggs' family before he was the Missouri Governor. Boggs offered Mary permanent residence with his family if she left Mormonism, but she declined.

On July 20, 1833, a non-Mormon mob destroyed the church printing office throwing Mormon scripture into the street. When the ruffians were not looking, Mary and her sister Caroline gathered up many of the papers containing the revelations of Joseph Smith into their arms and hid them in a corn field. They eventually gave them back to the printer, William W. Phelps. Today, the recovered revelations are contained in modern LDS scripture called the Doctrine and Covenants, where the revelation on marriage was later printed.⁵⁹ Obviously at a very young age, Mary Rollins was a “true” believer in the doctrine of Joseph Smith. Revelation through Joseph Smith was one way that religious education on various religious topics was disseminated to Mormon believers. Because of this, Mormon historians have often blamed Brigham Young for the long-held ban on blacks in the priesthood and not Joseph Smith.

⁵⁸ Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, “Autobiography of Mary E. Lightner (1818-1913)”, accessed on November 16, 2017. <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/MLightner.html>; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 207.

⁵⁹ D&C, 132; Smith, *HC* 1:390-400; Lightner, *Autobiography*; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 209.

There is a lack of documentary evidence where Joseph Smith categorically denied the priesthood to blacks in the church under a thus-sayeth-the-Lord kind of written declaration. That does not mean a revelation on the subject was not received. If a revelation was received, unfortunately it may have been destroyed by the mob in this episode. It is unlikely that Mary Lightner and her sister gathered all of the revelations of Joseph Smith that had been scattered by the mob. Perhaps additional revelations on polygamy and blacks holding the priesthood were lost and/or destroyed at that time. However, a lack of written records was never enough to prevent Smith from teaching his adherents the religious concepts that in his mind he developed from, the divine. He most certainly educated his most devoted followers into the practice of plural marriage prior to committing it to writing in 1843. The relationship between Smith and Lightner began early in Mary's young life, and it is safe to say up to this time, Smith was a mentor to Mary Lightner. She proved herself as a faithful follower of Mormonism, a prerequisite to learning about the "mysteries of the kingdom," including polygamy.⁶⁰

In August 1835 at age seventeen, Mary married a non-Mormon, Adam Lightner and moved to Far West, Missouri. After anti-Mormon conflicts in that part of the country, the Lightner's relocated to other parts of the country before settling back with the Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois. However, Adam Lightner could not find employment in Nauvoo, so Mary went to work teaching painting. One of her students was Julia Murdock Smith, adopted daughter to Joseph and Emma Smith. Joseph must have remembered Mary from his previous encounter when Mary was a young girl. Now, she was a married young mother of two. The experience of teaching one of the Smith children must have rekindled Joseph and Mary's friendship.

⁶⁰ Mosiah 1:5, 2:9, Book of Mormon; Eph. 3:4 (AV).

Smith claimed God commanded him to baptize the Lightner's, Henry and Eveline Rollins (Mary's brother and his wife), and Mary's Aunt Gilbert⁶¹ even though Adam was the only non-Mormon. Smith attempted to persuade Adam to get baptized, but in the end, he refused. The rest of the group was re-baptized and confirmed members of the church. The early church did that to recommit its members to remain faithful. Mary later explained why her husband never joined the church, "My husband did not belong to the Church. I begged him and pled with him to join but he would not. He said he did not believe in it, though he thought a great deal of Joseph. He sacrificed his property rather than testify against Joseph. . . After he said this, I went forward and was sealed to Joseph for eternity."⁶²

Church records show Mary's sealing to Smith took place in February 1842 for eternity, but not for time. Presumably, Smith was sealed to Mary at the time of their re-baptism, which may explain his feelings when the Lightner's informed him they were leaving Nauvoo. For Smith, Mary met his criteria of faithfulness to his teachings by being re-baptized. Otherwise, it is unlikely he would have married her for eternity. His teachings on celestial marriage was clear, it was reserved for faithful members of his church of which Mary, in Smith's mind, was one. Although not all of Smith's polyandrous wives were concurrently married to non-members, the fact that Adam Lightner refused to become a member gave Mary all the justification she needed to be sealed to Smith. Those who reject the restored gospel are damned! Why would Mary want to be connected to a man who had no hope of having an eternal mate. Undoubtedly, Smith taught her the eternal nature of marriage and that it was an earthly ordinance that could only be

⁶¹ Mary Lightner's Aunt Gilbert was the wife of Algernon Sidney Gilbert, Aunt Gilbert and Mary's mother were sisters. Algernon Gilbert was a business partner to Newell K. Whitney. Whitney & Gilbert together owned a store in Kirtland, Ohio. After her husband's death, Mary's mother moved the family to Kirtland to live with the Gilberts. Lightner, Autobiography.

⁶² Lightner, Autobiography.

performed in mortality. This is one way to hedge her bets and be sealed to a man, Smith, who was destined for heaven.

Because there was no work in Nauvoo, Adam found employment fifteen miles outside of Nauvoo requiring another move. Smith became emotional when he learned of their move “and while the tears ran down his cheeks, he prophesied that if we attempted to leave the Church we would have plenty of sorrow. “At last when you are worn out, and almost ready to die, you will get back to the Church.’” Mary doubted the prophesy, but after a myriad of failed business ventures and the early death of six of their ten children, she decided the prophesy had been fulfilled. The affect that Mary’s move had on Smith is an indication of the strong emotional tie he had with the Lightner’s. This was truly, in Smith’s eyes, one of his wives separating from him, and the children she had borne with Adam Lightner would one day be Smith’s as well. Since Mary was sealed to Smith, her children would be sealed to him as well. The example of Joseph Smith would be a template for religious education for the members who would follow his lead in subsequent years.

After eighteen years being separated from the church, Mary, Adam, and their remaining children made their way to Utah where the Saints were now living. Adam never joined the church, but Mary remained active in church for the rest of her life, all the while knowing her third husband, Brigham Young, was now the President of the Church. Upon the death of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young allowed each of Smith’s widows to remarry a faithful Mormon man of their choice. Mary Lightner chose Brigham Young, even though her first husband, Adam, was still living.⁶³

⁶³ Lightner, *Autobiography*; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 207-220.

The circumstances upon which this situation occurred may explain why Smith and later Young had polyandrous relationships. In Mormon theology, only faithful members of the church who fulfill their promises to God have any chance of having marital relationships in eternity. In other words, if a non-Mormon spouse is married to a faithful Mormon spouse, but refuses to participate fully by being baptized and sealed in the temple, the marriage ends at death. God will give the faithful spouse to another faithful member as marriage partners in eternity.⁶⁴

Another point to mention is that Mormon theology or scripture (both old and new) does not allow for Mormon men who hold the priesthood to sleep with the same woman while both are living and married to her.⁶⁵ That would be inconsistent with Mormon doctrine and the law of chastity. So although Mary Lightner was married to multiple men, it is more probable that her marriages to Young and Smith were consummated exclusively by Adam Lightner. The relationship between Smith and Mary must have been strictly platonic.⁶⁶ However, since her first husband, Adam, rejected the Lord's church, Smith would be Mary's husband in the eternities for eternal increase. Brigham Young's marriage to Mary Lightner must have also been platonic, but for time only and put in place merely as a safeguard in case Adam Lightner shirked his duty as a husband or perhaps died prematurely. The notion presented in this marriage is that God always watches out for his children who embrace his gospel, "whether by mine own voice or the voice of my servants [the prophets] it is the same."⁶⁷

In her own words, Mary Lightner explained in detail how Joseph Smith persuaded her to become his plural wife. His persuasiveness regarding his revelations on behalf of other people

⁶⁴ D&C, 76:50-71, 79-82, 112; 132:4-7, 15-16; McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 80-81; JD, 1:64-65.

⁶⁵ D&C, 132:52-55.

⁶⁶ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 15-23; Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 438-43; McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 23-25.

⁶⁷ D&C, 1:14.

regarding God's will for them was one aspect of religious educating to his followers. Plural marriage was one topic that Smith personally taught both male and female adherents. The record clearly shows that some of his wives were convinced of the divine purpose of polygamy after Smith explained he received a revelation for them. For instance, Mary at first was not thrilled about marrying Smith until he said, "The angel came to me three times between the year of '34 and '42 and said I was to obey that principle or he would slay [destroy] me."

Next, Smith told Mary that before either of them were born, "I was created for him before the foundation of the Earth was laid." Smith further stated that God revealed to him in 1834 to marry her, but circumstances did not allow it until February 1842 when Joseph proposed to Mary in the home of Newel K. Whitney. The religious education Smith provided his followers was first, personal instruction to the individual in the presence of a close converted friend or wife who might add their affirmative perspective on the subject combined with Smith's personal revelation. An important aspect of being converted was that the adherent experienced their own personal revelation from God that what Smith claimed was right. Mary's revelation came in the form of dreams she had been having for several years that she would become Smith's wife. She thought the dreams were of the devil until Smith proposed marriage to her. Furthermore, as he did with subsequent marriages, Smith linked plural marriage to individual salvation by telling Mary that the Lord gave him power to save all those sealed to him. Though she married Smith she ultimately stayed with her current husband, Adam Lightner, because Smith asked her to. The

advantage of this approach as well to other polyandry marriages was to hide these clandestine marriages from the public.⁶⁸

Eliza R. Snow

Eliza Snow was the sister of Lorenzo Snow, the fifth President of the LDS Church. She was converted to Mormonism around the same time frame as many of her family members in 1835. Like many nineteenth century Americans, the Snow family was very religious joining Sidney Rigdon's Campbellite congregation in Kirtland, Ohio in 1828. In the case of the Snow's, all of them had the added benefit of being well educated in civic as well as religious matters. Young Eliza won poetry contests and was recognized as a strong-minded woman by those who knew her. Although she had opportunities for romance, Eliza Roxy Snow probably would have remained single if she had not married Joseph Smith. In December of 1835 she boarded with the Joseph Smith family where she undoubtedly became acquainted personally and intimately with Joseph and Emma. Eliza taught school in Kirtland and later in Nauvoo. She quickly became a devoted follower and leader in the LDS community.

In Nauvoo Illinois, Snow became the secretary of the Church women's organization, the Relief Society, led by Emma Smith as president. She heard the rumors bantered about the area of current polygamous practices. Like many members who later participated in plural marriage, Eliza found the concept ". . . very repugnant to [her] feelings . . ." Polygamy went against her religious and educational background, but eventually she overcame her resistance to it. A firm Bible believer, she recognized the ancient practice of polygamy by some of God's leading

⁶⁸ Mary Elizabeth Lightner, "The Testimony of Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner", Mary Lightner 1905 Address, typescript, BYU Address to Brigham Young University, 1905, BYU Archives and Manuscripts Source: Mary Elizabeth Lightner, Address at Brigham Young University, April 14, 1905, typescript, BYU. <https://user.xmission.com/~plporter/lds/merlbyu.htm>; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 211-13.

biblical characters. In addition, Eliza was convinced she was living in the last dispensation where all things were to be restored by God's anointed, Joseph Smith. Therefore, Eliza Snow recorded in her journal, "I was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, for time and eternity, in accordance with the Celestial Law of Marriage which God has revealed . . . This, one of the most important circumstances of my life, I never had had cause to regret."⁶⁹ Eliza was thirty-eight when she married thirty-six year old Smith on June 29, 1842. Apparently, Emma Smith not only knew of the marriage but sanctioned it.

Although Eliza Snow never bore any children in her life time, there is evidence to support an intimate sexual relationship between Joseph and Eliza. Despite stories of Emma Smith being antagonistic toward polygamy, Eliza reported that it was Emma who invited her to stay with the Joseph Smith family on August 14, 1842. It appears Emma accepted the doctrine of polygamy in its early stages but soured on it as her husband continued to marry more and more wives. On February 11, 1843, Eliza suddenly moved from the Smith residence presumably because Emma Smith no longer appreciated sharing her husband with other women.⁷⁰

There are not many details depicting the approach Joseph took with teaching and educating Eliza. However, a similar pattern emerges when Joseph's prospective plural wife, Eliza Snow, moves in with his family, so he can be better acquainted with her. Undoubtedly, it would have been Joseph that introduced polygamy to Eliza probably using her knowledge of scripture regarding ancient Old Testament prophets who practiced it. For Eliza, her education and knowledge of scripture would have contributed to her conversion to plural marriage religious

⁶⁹ Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed. "Sketch of My Life." From *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000), 16-17; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 312-13; Ulrich, *A House Full of Females*, 61-62, 71-73; Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 494-95.

⁷⁰ Beecher, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow*, 16-17; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 307-17; Ulrich, *A House Full of Females*, 61-62, 70-73.

education along with personal meetings with Joseph Smith. Smith probably shared the same spiritual manifestations with Eliza about being commanded of God to enter the practice under threat of condemnation if he refused. Of course, the Lord revealed to Joseph that Eliza too was chosen before the foundations of the world to be his wife in eternity. And the religious education of Eliza regarding plural marriage would not be complete without her own personal conversion story. She said regarding polygamy, “. . . that God had commanded His servants to establish the order . . . I knew that God . . . was speaking . . .”⁷¹

Eliza and Emily Partridge

Eliza and Emily Partridge were the daughters of Edward Partridge, early convert and first Mormon Bishop. The late Bishop Partridge passed away and the girl’s mother had re-married when Joseph married nineteen-year old Emily and her twenty-two-year older sister, Eliza, four days later in March of 1843. Like many of Smith’s plural wives, the Partridge sisters lived in the Smith home prior to marrying them. Joseph taught the principle of polygamy to each one eventually persuading them to participate, but he married them secretly without even the sisters being aware of the other marrying Smith. Emma was also unaware of the marriages. However, after careful consideration she gave consent to her husband to take additional wives as long as Emma could choose the wives for him. Smith acquiesced to his wife’s wishes but was surprised when Emma chose both Partridge sisters to be her sister wives. For Emma’s sake, Smith remarried them as if marrying them for the first time, rather than divulge to Emma he had already married them. Eliza Partridge wrote of the experience, “This was truly a great trial for me, but I had the most implicit confidence in him as a Prophet of the Lord and [could] not but believe his words and . . . accept the privilege of being sealed to him as a wife for time and all

⁷¹ Beecher, 16-17; Compton, 312-16; Ulrich, 70-73.

eternity.” Heber C. Kimball sealed Smith to Eliza four days after her younger sister, Emily, was sealed to him. The second marriage ceremony for both was performed two months later by Judge James Adams in the presence of Emma Smith.⁷²

According to Emily Partridge, Emma Smith’s attitude changed from the day they married her husband; she became their bitter enemy. Both sisters remained in the home for several more months, but the tension between Emma and the girls was unbearable for all concerned. Emma’s jealousy could not be contained, and it eventually led her to demand Joseph remove the Partridge sisters from their home. In her diary, Emily noted, “I do not know why she [Emma] gave us to him . . . she wanted us immediately divorced . . . But we thought different. We looked upon the covenants we had made as sacred. She afterwards gave Sarah and Maria Lawrence to him, and they lived in the house as his wives . . . but my sister and I were cast off.” Emma Smith continually berated the young ladies until they finally moved out, each staying with a different family. Smith made very little contact with either sister once they left his home. After Smith was killed in Carthage, Illinois, Emily married Brigham Young while Eliza married another Apostle, Amassa Lyman, for time only, since they both were sealed to Smith for eternity.⁷³

Joseph Smith’s approach with the Partridge sisters in the teaching of plural marriage comes mostly from Emily Partridge’s diaries and the many times she broached the subject in public discourse over her life time. What we know of Eliza’s religious education into the practice of polygamy also comes from Emily Partridge’s recordings. According to Emily, Smith introduced the subject of polygamy by first offering her a letter of explanation. Although it is unclear exactly what was in the letter, eighteen-year-old Emily clearly believed it contained a subject matter inappropriate for a married man to share with another woman. Emily’s diary

⁷² Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 405-409.

⁷³ Compton, 409-413.

stated, “The first intimation I had from Brother Joseph that there was a pure and holy order of plural marriage was in the spring of 1842.” Next, Emily indicated that she had “shut him [Joseph] up so quick” that it took him several months before Joseph broached the subject again. The first time was probably the letter, it was not the first time Smith used this tactic. During those months when Smith remained silent, Emily had a difficult time while thinking about Smith’s proposal and wishing she had at least read the letter. Making matters worse, Smith had sworn her to secrecy, and she could not even tell her sister, Eliza, or her mother.

Furthermore, Emily felt that Smith tested her ability to keep the secret of the marriage proposal shortly after the letter incident by having another woman, Elizabeth Davis Durfee, attempt to extract the information from her. Emily found out later that Durfee was already a plural wife of Smith. After inviting the sisters over to her home, Durfee introduced the subject of spiritual wives⁷⁴ and asked her if Emily had heard any rumors regarding it. Emily wanted to share the secret, but thought better of it. Finally, Emily could not keep it to herself any longer and told Eliza of Smith’s marriage proposal. The result was that Eliza fell into a deep depression which either meant it was the first time she became aware that Joseph was teaching polygamy or she realized Emily too was being groomed for marriage to him. Emily seemed to think it was Eliza’s first inkling that Smith was behind polygamy. Regarding the incident, Emily stated, “. . . it served to prepare her [Eliza] to receive the principles that were revealed soon after.” Again, like other plural wives, Emily received her own conversion to polygamy before finally accepting Joseph’s teachings on marriage. Once converted to polygamy, Emily recited on

⁷⁴ In early Mormonism, the term “spiritual wives” was used to describe the teachings of plural marriage to Smith’s followers. However, the term was abandoned due to John C. Bennett’s expose that used similar wording, “spiritual wifery.” An obvious attempt to distance proper celestial marriage as depicted in Smith’s revelation (*D&C*, 132) and Bennett’s fraudulent marriage union that Mormons believed was a counterfeit to God’s marriage system. Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness* 262, 407.

many occasions how Joseph made another attempt to educate her into the practice of “Celestial Marriage.” Smith explained to Emily that polygamy had been revealed to him, but he had been commanded to keep it a secret for now. He was to introduce it to a select few of his most trusted followers. “The Lord,” said Smith, “had given Emily to him to be his mate for eternity.” One of Smith’s wives, Elizabeth Durfee, who had tested Emily previously invited her to meet with Smith at Heber C. Kimball’s home. Durfee told Emily that Joseph intended to propose marriage and marry her the same night. Although Emily had reservations about the marriage, she went anyway, accepted the marriage proposal and was sealed to Smith by Heber C. Kimball without the presence of her family. It was not the way she imagined her marriage to take place, in secrecy without any celebration. On their wedding night, Joseph and Emily went their separate ways. Emily stated that in later years of the short time they were married, Joseph slept with her on several occasions.⁷⁵ Since Eliza Partridge did not share many details of Joseph Smith’s approach to educating her into the practice, we can only assume it transpired in a similar fashion.

Sarah and Maria Lawrence

Sarah and Maria Lawrence were another couple of sisters who married Joseph Smith after Emma Smith chose them for him. In August 1837 while living in Canada, the Lawrence family was converted to Mormonism through the missionary work of Parley P. Pratt, Joseph Smith, and John Taylor. Pratt first preached there in early spring 1836 when John Taylor and his wife Leonora were converted. William Law was another notable Canadian convert to Mormonism who knew the Lawrence’s well. It was there that Sarah and Maria as young ladies met their future husband, Joseph Smith, for the first time. By 1838, the Lawrence’s relocated to Missouri during the Mormon conflict with that state. In 1840, fearing continued persecution,

⁷⁵ Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, 406-09.

Father Lawrence moved his family between Commerce (later named Nauvoo) and Quincy, Illinois where he died. The Lawrence's inherited a considerable amount of wealth from their father. Mother Lawrence re-married and Joseph became the two-girl's guardian when they came to live with him.⁷⁶ "In late spring 1843 Joseph married both Maria, nineteen, and Sarah, Seventeen."⁷⁷

Soon after Emma Smith gave her husband the Partridge sisters for plural wives, she gave him the Lawrence sisters as wives as well.⁷⁸ Other than the fact Smith married Sarah and Maria Lawrence, not much is known about the circumstances of their marriage to the prophet. There is no information regarding how Emma Smith got along with the Lawrence's as there was with the Partridges. However, in the spring of 1844 William Law, a close associate of Joseph Smith, was disaffected from the church. He threatened to expose polygamy. He must have had knowledge of Maria Lawrence's marriage to the prophet for in May 1844, Law filed a suit against Smith in the local circuit court accusing Smith of having an adulterous affair through a polygamous relationship with her since October 1843. Smith denied it stating, "What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one."⁷⁹ Smith countered with his own suit against Law for slander against Maria. The Laws (William and his brother Wilson) and other disaffected Mormons responded by publishing "the *Nauvoo Expositor*, which publicly accused the prophet of practicing polygamy."⁸⁰

As Mayor of Nauvoo, Joseph Smith and the city council ordered the Marshal to destroy the *Expositor* as a public nuisance. This action resulted in Smith's arrest and incarceration.

⁷⁶ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 473-75.

⁷⁷ Compton, 475.

⁷⁸ *JD*, 13:194.

⁷⁹ Compton, 476.

⁸⁰ Compton, 477.

Subsequently, Joseph and his brother Hyrum were shot to death in Carthage Jail, while awaiting trial. Thus all of Smith's brides became instant widows. After the martyrdom, Sarah Lawrence married polygamist Heber C. Kimball for time, while her sister, Maria, married Almon Babbit, another polygamist, also for time. Maria and her new family stayed in Nauvoo where she died a short time later, but Sarah went west with Kimball's large extended family. Eventually she divorced Heber C. Kimball, remarried a monogamist, moved to Northern California, and left the Church.⁸¹

Virtually nothing is known of Smith's approach in educating the Lawrence sisters in the practice of plural marriage. We can only presume that he persuaded them with prophetic utterances of the Lord revealing to him that God had given them to him as wives before the earth was created as he did with Emily and Eliza Partridge. Presumably, they too had conversion stories that enabled them to accept his religious teachings on marriage.

Helen Mar Kimball

Helen Mar Kimball was the youngest of all of Joseph Smith's plural wives. She was fourteen, an age common for marriage in nineteenth century America, when she married Smith in May 1843.⁸² Smith said the marriage was to have eternal consequences for both the Smith and Kimball families by sealing the two families together eternally resulting in the salvation of both families. Smith sent her father, Heber C. Kimball, to her in early summer 1843 convincing Helen it was right for married men to take other wives when the Lord commands it. This tactic of sending a trusted person to a potential plural wife in convincing them of its divine nature was used more than once in Smith's attempt to teach religious education on marriage. After her father

⁸¹ Compton, 476-485.

⁸² N. Keller, "19th Century Nuptiality and Propaganda II," Feb. 1, 2010, FairMormon, accessed April 9, 2018. www.fairmormon.org/blog/2010/02/01/19c-nuptiality-and-propaganda-ii.

asked Helen directly if she would become Joseph's plural wife, like most first responses from initiates, she was repulsed by the notion. After a day of thinking it over, Joseph Smith visited the Kimball home the following morning to explain celestial marriage in detail to Helen. Smith said, "If you will take this step, it will ensure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that of your father's household & all of your kindred."⁸³

Although Helen was in love with another, Horace Whitney, she reluctantly consented to become Joseph's wife for time and all eternity in the face of such a great reward. Unlike Smith's other plural wives, when Joseph was murdered Helen did not marry an apostle for time. She married her childhood sweetheart with the expectation that she and her children with Horace would be sealed to Smith for eternity.⁸⁴ It should be remembered, however, that in Mormon theology no one will be coerced into staying married forever to someone they do not wish to be with. Helen and those who wish, can get divorced and remarried to the man or woman of their choice. The right to choose one's own destiny is paramount to true eternal happiness; otherwise it would not be heaven.

John C. Bennett

Few followers of Joseph Smith caused him more consternation than John C. Bennett.⁸⁵ Bennett introduced an imitation of plural marriage that would be called "spiritual wifery" by

⁸³ Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 499.

⁸⁴ Compton, 487-505.

⁸⁵ In 1840, John C. Bennett converted to Mormonism in Nauvoo, Illinois. A man of renowned accomplishment, Bennett was a year older than the Mormon Prophet. Smith was enamored with Bennett's dynamic personality and abilities. For two years, Bennett was Smith's right-hand man, becoming the first Mayor of Nauvoo. As a member of the inner circle of the Mormon leadership, Bennett learned from Smith the new marriage principle of plural marriage. Bennett allegedly used his clandestine knowledge of polygamy to justify adulterous affairs with Mormon women. For being unchaste, Smith dealt Bennett a devastating blow to his ego by excommunicating him. Bennett responded by publicly attacking the Church and its leaders exposing polygamy to American society in an expose. This action incited a renewed aggression against Smith

Smith's followers to distinguish it from the plural marriage that Joseph Smith advocated. Smith first became aware of Bennett when he received a friendly letter from him in July 1840. In the letter, Bennett offered his services to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon and the Saints in general. Bennett responded when Smith and Rigdon applied for a charter for their settlement in Commerce, Illinois, later called Nauvoo. The request came through Bennett's office of Quartermaster General. Bennett expressed great sympathy toward Latter-day Saints due to their persecutions in Missouri and wished to align himself to their cause.⁸⁶ Once in Nauvoo, Bennett quickly ingratiated himself to Smith and the Saints. He was elected as the first Mayor of Nauvoo, Major-general of the Nauvoo Legion, Chancellor of University of Nauvoo and Assistant President to Joseph Smith in a very short time after joining the church.⁸⁷

As quickly as John C. Bennett rose to the top of the Mormon hierarchy, he plummeted to the bottom. In June 1842, the LDS leadership addressed the membership in a public letter regarding Bennett. The members were informed of Bennett's excommunication and that they should treat him as "an impostor and base adulterer." It further explained the reasons for this harsh treatment of a "fellow brother" in the gospel of Christ. Soon after Bennett joined the church in August 1840, Smith received a letter from a credible source in the vicinity where Bennett had lived previously. The letter accused Bennett of abandoning a wife and at least two children. The writer cautioned the church regarding Bennett's character. However, because Joseph Smith was accustomed with having his own character maligned without cause and

and the Church not seen since the Missouri days. Before and after Bennett, Smith saw many close friends defect from him. Compton, 487-505.

⁸⁶ Smith, *HC* 4:169-170, 172.

⁸⁷ Smith, *HC* 4:287, 296, 341.

because of a lack of further evidence to substantiate the letter, it was kept quiet in the beginning.⁸⁸

Bennett began seducing women shortly after living in Nauvoo with the promise of marriage. When confronted about his misdeeds he promised to conform to principles of decency. Yet, it caused him to sink further into depravity by privately teaching the LDS community that freely engaging in sexual intercourse was doctrinally sound and that there was “no harm in it.” To gain more influence over the community, Bennett taught his hearers that he received authority from Joseph Smith and other leaders to teach sexual promiscuity. When some questioned why Smith had preached against such acts, Bennett retorted that it was because Smith wanted to avoid public persecution. Around July 1841, Smith received a letter from Hyrum Smith and close associate William Law confirming that Bennett had a living wife and children who had left him because of his mistreatment of them. It was read to Bennett and he acknowledged the truth of the allegation.⁸⁹

Bennett appeared to feel remorse and shame for his actions by attempting to commit suicide by poison, but he recovered. It was expected that he would transform his character, but instead he continued the same actions as before. Several female witnesses testified against him at a church discipline hearing. He persuaded others to follow his conduct giving them the impression that his immoral activities were condoned by church leadership. Because Bennett was in a leadership position, he was able to persuade some members that he had credibility. Bennett was caught again, but this time Joseph Smith required him to deny all his false allegations in a

⁸⁸ Smith, *HC* 5:35-38, 78-79; Ulrich, *A House Full of Females*, 73-75.

⁸⁹ *HC* 5:35-38, 78-79; Ulrich, *A House Full of Females*, 61, 73-75.

sworn statement. He admitted that Smith had never taught him privately or publicly to engage in improper sexual conduct.⁹⁰

It is reasonable to conclude that John C. Bennett was aware of the revelation on plural marriage, which in his mind gave him license to assume his own type of plural marriage contrary to Smith's revelations and teachings. Joseph Smith must have discussed the matter of plurality of wives for Bennett to develop his own notion of polygamy, while seducing women to his cause of "spiritual wifery." Undoubtedly, Smith was shocked and embarrassed in the way Bennett misused the new religious education information on marriage. Smith knew that his own teachings on marriage and Bennett's scheme to bed numerous women might be conflated by outsiders as well as members of the church. Enemies of the church could use this information to further persecute Smith and the Saints.⁹¹ Therefore, he kept the plurality of wives a secret, except for a few close associates. To his detriment, Smith must have included Bennett in the discussions since there was no one closer to Joseph Smith at that time than John C. Bennett.

Joseph Smith's Justification for Polygamy

Smith used Bible evidence regarding ancient plural marriage and his personal revelations on the subject to develop clandestine methods and tactics to convince his followers of its divine origin. He implemented these methods and tactics as a form of religious education to convince his followers to enter polygamy. The official revelation on eternal marriage including eternal polygamy was finally published with Joseph Smith's permission on July 12, 1843. The evidence indicates Smith was aware of the doctrine much earlier, probably when he was translating the Bible in 1831. Many private discussions and debate took place regarding the

⁹⁰ HC 5:35-38, 78-79; Ulrich, *A House Full of Females* 73-75.

⁹¹ John C. Bennett, *History of the Saints: or, An Expose of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), 85, 217-232; Ulrich, *A House Full of Females*, 73-75.

subject matter with his closest associates including Sidney Rigdon who was his scribe during the translation process. Rigdon would one day reject polygamy, leave the church and begin his own church due to the introduction of plural marriage into LDS church doctrine. It is clear from Smith's revelation that he too was disturbed by the scriptural evidence that faithful servants in the Old Testament engaged in marrying more than one wife. Great Bible prophets of God such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses all had a plurality of wives during their mortal life. In addition, great Kings of Israel like David and Solomon had also engaged in polygamy. Smith had a strong puritan New England upbringing which viewed these actions as immoral or indecent to anybody remotely akin to religious piety. The King James version of the Bible makes it clear that David and Solomon were condemned for marrying wives that were unauthorized by God. However, it makes no critical mention of the multiple wives that they had already married before they transgressed against God by marrying wives that were off limits to both Kings.⁹²

The revelation to Joseph Smith on marriage answered his basic question as to how Old Testament prophets and kings were justified in taking more than one wife. In addition, Smith and anybody else that the Lord commanded would also have to obey God's command to marry additional women or be condemned for refusing to obey God's law. Moreover, the revelation stated that God has "appointed" only one person on the earth at a time that has the power and authority to seal marriages, monogamous or polygamous, for eternity. Joseph Smith was designated in the revelation as the one person anointed by God who holds the spiritual keys to seal marriages for eternity. Later, Brigham Young replaced Joseph Smith and therefore became the only person appointed by God who had marriage sealing authority. The successors that followed likewise held the same authority that Joseph and Brigham held. The marriage revelation

⁹² *D&C*, 132; 2 Sam. 11:2-17 (AV), 12:1-13 (AV); 1 Kings 11:1-1 (AV); Smith, *HC* 5:501; Pratt, *Seer*, 106-108; *JD*, 1:57-64.

goes on to say marriages performed without the authorization of Smith will be null and void after this life. This includes all marriages within the church or without it that are not sealed by the authority of God as given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. All civil marriages throughout the world are valid only during mortality. Furthermore, those who are sealed in marriage by Joseph Smith's authority must not break their covenants and promises that they make at marriage, or they too will be damned—unable to receive all of God's blessings.⁹³

God commanded Abraham, said the revelation, to take another wife in fulfillment of the promises of God that his posterity would be as numerous as the "sands of the seashore." His first wife, Sarah, was also commanded to allow her husband, Abraham, to marry another wife. In response to God's command, Sarah gave Abraham Hagar as another wife. The commandment is compared to Abraham submitting to the command of God to sacrifice his son, Isaac, by killing him upon an altar. By killing Isaac, Abraham would be violating another command of God, "Thou shalt not kill."⁹⁴ However, Joseph Smith's revelation seems to imply that it is better to follow God's current commands even if it means to violate a previous command. God is the author of universal law; therefore the giver of divine law not only has the authority and right to command law, but to rescind law.⁹⁵ The significance of this line of reasoning is that unlike human beings, God can be relied upon because he is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. God gives his messages to his divine servants, the prophets,⁹⁶ to dispense among humanity.

Smith's revelation made it clear that David and Solomon originally had multiple wives because these plural marriages were authorized by God's prophet, Nathan. King David had

⁹³ *D&C*, 132; Smith, *HC* 5:501-502; *JD*, 1:63-65.

⁹⁴ *Exod.* 20:13 (AV).

⁹⁵ Smith, *HC* 5:504; *JD*, 1:60-62, 187-92.

⁹⁶ *Amos* 3:7 (AV).

multiple wives before he committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered Uriah, Bathsheba's husband.⁹⁷ The revelation goes on to say that Solomon also had multiple marriages and did not sin until he married unauthorized women that the prophet of his day had not given him permission to marry.

Revelation to the prophet Joseph Smith restored the authority to marry multiple wives. Adultery is defined as an intimate relationship outside of one's marital relationship or an unauthorized marriage. According to the revelation, Smith and those who were authorized by him to engage in polygamy were assured that they were not violating the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."⁹⁸

Furthermore, Emma Smith, Joseph's wife, was commanded to submit to polygamy under her husband's authority, or she would be punished. The same warning was given to all men and women who rejected polygamous lifestyles when instructed to participate by Joseph Smith, the living prophet. Authorized men were requested to get permission from their current wife, but if she refused to submit without a sufficient reason then the husband was free to marry against her will and the rebellious wife was condemned.⁹⁹ There is compelling evidence that Emma greatly resisted polygamy. This may explain why Joseph married some of his wives without Emma's knowledge.

The necessity for strict marital guidance became apparent when numerous individuals within the Mormon Church during Joseph Smith's administration "who were preaching,

⁹⁷ *D&C*, 132:39.

⁹⁸ *Exod.* 20:14 (AV).

⁹⁹ Smith, *HC* 5:504-507; Pratt, *The Seer*, 90-91, 106-108; *JD*, 1:62-65; Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation Of The Mormon Marriage System, 1840-1910* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 32-33. When Joseph Smith was murdered on June 27, 1844, Emma Smith and her children left the Mormon Church under Brigham Young's leadership most likely because of her rejection of polygamy. Ulrich, *A House Full of Females*, 376-77.

teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives” did so, without his authorization. They were either unaware or simply rejected the notion that Joseph Smith was the Prophet, Seer and Revelator and the only person on earth authorized by God to permit multiple wives to marry one husband. Smith stated emphatically, “I have constantly said no man shall have but one wife at a time, unless the Lord directs otherwise.”¹⁰⁰ Smith disciplined those who disobeyed this precept and went against his authority regarding polygamy. This was the case with John C. Bennett when he went about seducing women under the pretense of having authority from Smith. According to Smith, polygamy was to be practiced under strict guidelines and only when he gave permission. Otherwise, the members were to remain monogamous.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, those who rejected polygamy were also under condemnation from God. For example, Sidney Rigdon was once Joseph’s closest confidant. However, the relationship between Smith and Rigdon was strained during the latter part of Smith’s life. The fact that Smith proposed marriage to Rigdon’s daughter, Nancy, probably did not help to solidify good feelings between the two. Nancy Rigdon rejected Smith’s proposal for marriage.¹⁰²

One method for teaching religious education on marriage and other issues was private sermons, letters, or essays of instruction intended to persuade his audience. In addition, Smith used revelation from the almighty for specific individuals to teach his followers to enter polygamy, which served as a powerful convincing tool; what religious person wants to disobey the will of God? It was a powerful teaching method for Smith in describing how he believed God manages his kingdom generally. The following letter/essay may have been for the purpose

¹⁰⁰ Smith, *HC* 6:46; *JD*, 1:63-65.

¹⁰¹ Smith, *HC* 6:46; Ulrich, *A House Full of Females*, 73.

¹⁰² Smith, *HC* 5:134-36; Dean C. Jessee, ed. *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 537-40; Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 245-52; Ulrich, *A House Full of Females*, 73-75.

of offering justification for plural marriage as a divine institution. Joseph Smith wrote the essay entitled “Happiness” which was inserted into Church History in August 1842, prior to the publication on plural marriage in July 1843. It is not entirely clear what specific subject matter caused him to write the article. However, it seems clear he was attempting to persuade his audience not to have preconceived ideas on how God operates His kingdom. Smith attempted to answer questions about God and the existence of the human race that have been debated for thousands of years. Presumably he not only was addressing his followers in this letter, but also the entire world.

Further, the information presented is done so to persuade others that God is not as rigid and orthodox as some religions have determined. Polygamy is one of the most controversial subjects in LDS history and seems to be the subject that caused Smith the most consternation in his short life. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude the essay was an attempt to explain why God would allow a lifestyle so contradictory to the sensibilities of the American people. John C. Bennett identified it as a letter proposing marriage to Sidney Rigdon’s daughter, Nancy Rigdon. Be that as it may, the article entitled “Happiness” gives us great insight on Joseph Smith’s rationale that helped him justify introducing the teachings of plural marriage to the Church.¹⁰³

According to Smith, happiness is the “object and design of our existence.” He posits a path that exists in the plan of God that will allow every person to obtain the goal of happiness if they follow the path that leads to it. One aspect that leads to happiness is obedience to all Gods commandments. However, every religionist has their own interpretation on what those commandments consist of and how to live under Gods laws. The key determinant is to identify what the commandments are and then keep as closely aligned to them as possible. God is more

¹⁰³ Smith, *HC* 5:134-136; Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 537-540; Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 243-45.

liberal, says Smith, than most people perceive. His views are much different than human beings can grasp. God's tender mercies and blessings are more boundless than we recognize. Yet, God's punishments are sure and harsh for those who resist and fight against His kingdom. God commands, "Thou shalt not kill", yet at times He commands to destroy life. Smith said, "This is the principle upon which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire."¹⁰⁴ Smith goes on to explain that this principle applies to "all of God's dealings with His children. Everything that God gives us is lawful and right".

Smith seems to say, God gives rewards to His valiant faithful (obedient) servants to enjoy as blessings. However, if one takes a reward without God's permission, it will bring condemnation upon his people. The implication is clear when one understands the problems plural marriage caused Smith personally and ecclesiastically. Polygamy was rejected by some of those closest to him. Whether or not the essay was directed at Nancy Rigdon is not important. She was just one more follower that had shunned the notion of plural marriage. The letter appears to be an attempt at persuading those who struggle with plural marriage to suspend judgment, while being open to unorthodox teachings such as polygamy. Their salvation depends on how well they accept and receive new commands from God. Following the directives of God is superior to having a clear understanding of why we follow them. Understanding the commandments may come later after the trial of one's faith.¹⁰⁵ The message of Joseph Smith appears to be that obeying the commandments which come through the prophet of the Lord is the

¹⁰⁴ Smith, *HC* 5:135; Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 538; Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 243-45.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, *HC* 5:134-136; Jessee, 537-540; Bennett, 243-45.

most important lesson. Circumstances may change causing commandments to alter or change according to different variables. However, paramount to being a faithful child of God is the act of obedience to the Lord and His servants regardless of circumstance.

Joseph Smith held more authority and control over his church than any other Mormon Prophet. However, many of his followers either refused to acknowledge or were ignorant of the authority Smith held over them. Virtually every person who challenged his authority lost. Based on the evidence presented here and according to Mormonism, Smith was the one person on earth who held all authority from God. As such, it was his responsibility to receive revelation for the entire church. Others may offer suggestions, but Smith had the authority from God to make all final decisions.¹⁰⁶ Smith claimed to receive many revelations as his church began to grow. Acquiring knowledge was emphasized because, according to Mormonism, it is only one of two things a person may take with them into heaven. The other is family. Therefore, the bigger one's family, the better. Hence, polygamy tended to provide a larger family for obvious reasons and was seen as superior to monogamy. LDS revelation asserted the importance of teaching "diligently," so that God's grace would be present. God's grace would help members receive instruction more "perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel."¹⁰⁷

In early LDS history, the church was forced to relocate several times because of persecution, perhaps in part due to rumors of Mormon religious education on the teachings and practices of plural marriage. The first Mormon Temples and church buildings were used for religious instruction into this practice. Temples were provided early on for members of the church to seal their families for eternity. However, Smith reserved teaching polygamy ordinances exclusively for his closest allies. Of course, all revelation must be in harmony with scripture.

¹⁰⁶ *D&C*, 1:38.

¹⁰⁷ *D&C*, 88:78.

One of the reasons monogamist and polygamist Mormons alike eventually regarded the practice of polygamy as God's commandment was that it was in harmony with scripture. According to Mormon authorities, holy prophets of the bible practiced plural marriage without the slightest condemnation from the Lord.

Joseph Smith worked within a theocratic system rather than a democracy or oligarchy. He made changes to church doctrine and policy according to his revelations and interpretation of scripture. During Smith's era, change was inevitable since his church was still in flux. However, change was completely the prerogative of Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith knew polygamy was problematic, that's why he kept it hidden from the public. He inadvertently developed a religious education methodology when he initiated the practice. First, Smith confided exclusively on the subject of polygamy with his most trusted associates. Second, he placed them under strict guidelines. Polygamy was not to be used to satisfy the lusts of men (i.e. John C. Bennett), but to provide physical bodies for God's spirit children. One Book of Mormon scripture justified plural marriage, ". . . For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife . . . For I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me . . . For if I will . . . raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things."¹⁰⁸

Third, only Joseph Smith had authority to seal plural wives to any man or someone whom he delegated for that purpose. Fourth, to marry multiple wives, a man had to receive permission from Smith. He only gave permission to the Saints that proved themselves worthy to enter the practice. Fifth, refusal to follow the command to marry another wife or become another wife was tantamount to damnation for the party that resisted. Also, practicing polygamy without Smith's

¹⁰⁸ Jacob 2:26-30, *Book of Mormon*.

endorsement could cause condemnation to the disobedient. The latter was considered adultery punishable by excommunication (expulsion from the church). Smith gave commandments to a few close associates to engage in plural marriage with the caution to keep the practice hidden from the public. He knew if it was made known, persecution and misunderstandings would follow.

Furthermore, Smith did not make it mandatory that all his followers become polygamists. Presumably, not everyone was prepared spiritually, mentally, or financially to be responsible for a large family. Smith was very familiar with scriptural history and justification to practice plural marriage. He made an independent decision based on his revelations which was antithetical to most Americans moral sensibilities. There was not much debate nor were there politics used on the issue; Smith made the decision to participate in polygamy, while other believers either accepted or rejected it. Finally, Smith saw himself solely as the mouth-piece of God where power and authority rested with him. His role as prophet led to the implementation of a new understanding of marriage; one that was eternal whether or not it was polygamous. Polygamy was so transformative to the church that it is difficult to find anybody today that is not aware of its place in Mormon history. As the founder of Mormonism, Smith was the leading figure behind the change. Others would continue the legacy of plural marriage which Smith began.

Moreover, through the leadership of President Smith, “righteous” Saints could participate in an Old Testament institution, polygamy. To the outside world, Latter-day Saints seemed “peculiar”¹⁰⁹ with their unorthodox belief system regarding marriage and other doctrines. Also, as mentioned, the only reason given for why God justified plural marriage comes from the Book

¹⁰⁹ Exod. 19:3-8 (AV); 1Pet. 2:9 (AV); Rodney Turner, “The Quest for a Peculiar People,” Ensign May 1972.

of Mormon. God explained its purpose, to “. . . raise up seed unto me [God] . . .”¹¹⁰ One only needs to explore the family pedigree of many of today’s LDS Apostles and lay members to understand the significance of that statement. Many of today’s Apostles and lay member’s forefathers participated in plural marriage. It is a matter of practicality that more children would be born to a polygamist family, than to one restricted by monogamy. Like Abraham’s small flock that grew more numerous than the “sands of the seashore”, the fledgling Mormon community grew into great numbers partly through plural marriage. Polygamy may have been one factor that sustained the church in the face of so much opposition. While many American-born religions faded into history, the LDS church became the most successful.

Polygamy: Sexual Gratification

Enemies of the Mormon Church have often claimed that polygamy was established for the purpose of gratifying the sexual lusts of the Mormon hierarchy. This assessment is rather shortsighted if one considers the historical heretofore mentioned facts behind instituting the practice of plural marriage and the negative response of initiates upon first hearing about this commandment. Initially, Joseph Smith kept the practice a secret from the main body of the church. Based on the response of some of his closest friends it seemed to be a necessary approach.

At times, Emma Smith allowed Joseph to marry other women, yet, she was unable to continue her support of the practice; she openly fought against polygamy. Mormon history lauds Emma for being faithful to her husband under many circumstances, but not regarding Celestial Marriage. There is evidence that Emma used her office as president of the Relief Society to

¹¹⁰ Jacob 2:30, *Book of Mormon*.

abolish the practice altogether.¹¹¹ Authors Jill Derr, Janath Cannon, and Maureen Beecher in *Women of Covenant* stated, “Emma Smith began each of the March 9 and 16, 1844, meetings with the reading of a W. W. Phelps text, ‘The Voice of Innocence,’ which pleaded protection for the ‘virtuous mothers, wives and daughters of Nauvoo’ against ‘debauchees, vagabonds, and rakes.’”¹¹²

However, the condemnation was apparently against apostate Mormons who were endorsing a counterfeit practice of plural marriage called “Spiritual Wifery.” As mentioned, John C. Bennett was the author of this system, and Joseph Smith and Brigham Young both condemned his actions. In the mind of Joseph Smith there was a clear distinction between the Celestial Marriage that he endorsed as revelation from God, and the “Spiritual Wife System” that Bennett promoted for self-gratification. Smith did not want anybody confusing the two, so he preached against Bennett’s proposed method from the pulpit. From a sermon, at the time of the controversy, Joseph Smith made it clear when it was wrong to take more than one wife. He said, “we wish to keep the commandments of God in all things, as given directly from heav’n to us, living by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord,”¹¹³

This was not a disavowal of every kind of polygamy, only the kind the Lord does not approve. Joseph was well aware of the words he used. Keeping the commandments meant following God’s mouth piece, which Smith knew was him. Therefore, if Joseph Smith said it was okay for a man to marry additional wives, it was the same as if God commanded it. Nevertheless, Emma Smith used her position in the Relief Society and enlisted her Mormon sisters to oppose

¹¹¹ Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of the Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 60-61; Janet Peterson, *Elect Ladies*, 16.

¹¹² Derr, *Women of Covenant*, 61; Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 20.

¹¹³ Derr, 61; Daynes, 32-33.

not only Bennett's system of polygamy, but her husband's as well. Moreover, even Brigham Young, probably the best-known polygamist, had a difficult time with this principle. Richard and Joan Ostling said in their *Mormon America*,

When Smith first inducted him into the secret commandment of plural marriage, Young later recalled, 'it was the first time in my life that I desired the grave, and I could hardly get over it for a long time. And when I saw a funeral, I felt to envy the corpse its situation.'¹¹⁴

The practice of polygamy was at odds with western culture. The early Anglo-Saxon Americans came from Western Europe, where the practice of plural marriage was made illegal.¹¹⁵

Polygamy may have been strange to traditional western culture, but as Orson Pratt asserts, it was far from uncommon in the Biblical eastern tradition.

Another close associate of Smith's was Heber C. Kimball who would be one of his most devoted followers of Mormonism generally and polygamy specifically. However, before Smith could confide with Heber the full secret, he first tested his loyalty. As part of the test, Smith requested that Heber give up his own wife, Vilate Kimball, in marriage to him. Because of Kimball's deep and abiding faith that Joseph Smith was God's mouthpiece and servant on earth, he reluctantly, but obediently led his wife to the prophet's home and offered Vilate to Smith in marriage. Smith was pleased with Kimball's devotion, and instead of taking his wife, he released him of this obligation by sealing the couple for time and for all eternity on the spot.¹¹⁶

This incident was a test of faith for Heber C. Kimball, but the real test for Vilate Kimball was yet to come. Her response to Celestial Marriage, however, was quite different from Emma Smith. Even though Smith had observed the devotion and loyalty of both, the Kimball's, when

¹¹⁴ Ostling and Ostling, *Mormon America*, 57.

¹¹⁵ Pratt, *The Seer* (Salt Lake City: Seagull Book & Tape, 1993), 80.

¹¹⁶ Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball: An Apostle, The Father and Founder of the British Mission* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945), 323-24.

the time came for Heber to take additional wives, Smith asked him to keep it from his wife, Vilate. Probably because Smith assumed Vilate might react similarly to the way Emma acted toward plural marriage. Heber C. Kimball had to be commanded three times to take additional wives, but was reluctant to do so, because of his love for Vilate. He did not want to offend Vilate by not only taking more wives, but also by deceiving her in the process. The Kimball's daughter, Helen Mar Kimball (one of Smith's plural wives), explained:

“My mother had noticed a change in his manner and appearance, and when she inquired the cause, he tried to evade her questions. At last he promised he would tell her after a while, if she would only wait. This trouble so worked upon his mind that his anxious and haggard looks betrayed him daily and hourly, and finally his misery became so unbearable that it was impossible to control his feelings. He became sick in body, but his mental wretchedness was too great to allow of his retiring, and he would walk the floor till nearly morning, and sometimes the agony of his mind was so terrible that he would wring his hands and weep like a child, and beseech the Lord to be merciful and reveal to her this principle, for he himself could not break his vow of secrecy.”¹¹⁷

Helen further explained how her mother, Vilate, was reduced to prayer to find out what the matter was with her husband. Vilate related that she had received a revelation from God, showing her the beauty and honor of Celestial Marriage. Helen explained that this doctrine gave her parents the assurance that they would receive eternal exaltation in the Kingdom of Heaven. In addition, Vilate Kimball was shown in vision the women that Heber had already married in secret. Vilate was totally converted to plural marriage and returned to her husband and said, “Heber, what you kept from me the Lord has shown me.”¹¹⁸ Vilate said she never saw a happier man then when she told Heber of her vision, and that she knew it was from God. Though her trials and burdens were often heavy, Vilate Kimball stood faithfully by her husband as he eventually married forty-five wives. She would become a very good friend to each of her

¹¹⁷ Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 326-327.

¹¹⁸ Whitney, 327.

husband's plural wives.¹¹⁹ It seems clear that some women readily accepted Celestial Marriage while others completely rejected it.

Orson Pratt's Fall

Another follower of Smith who initially struggled with the new marriage custom of polygamy was Orson Pratt. He too was influenced to turn away from Smith by none other than John C. Bennett. To gain credibility with the Mormon community, Bennett solicited the help of two Mormon leaders to substantiate his claims against Joseph Smith. Sidney Rigdon and Orson Pratt¹²⁰ were having their doubts regarding the moral character of Smith. *The Wasp*, a Mormon newspaper, published several sworn statements from the Nauvoo citizenry attesting to the "high moral character" of Joseph Smith. The statements denounced Bennett's accusations that Smith was guilty of adultery and fornication. Much to the displeasure of Smith, both Pratt and Rigdon refused to sign the statements which demonstrated a rupture in their relationship with Smith.¹²¹ A letter written in July of 1842 by John C. Bennett to the Sangamo Journal may shed light on Orson Pratt's reluctance to vouch for Smith's character:

"... Joe Smith stated to me...that he intended to make that amiable and accomplished lady [Mrs. Sarah M. Pratt] one of his *spiritual wives*, for the Lord had given her to him, and he requested me to assist him in consummating his hellish purposes, but I told him I would not do it—that she had been much neglected and abused by the church during the absence of her husband [Apostle Orson Pratt] in Europe, and that if the Lord had given her to him he must attend

¹¹⁹ Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 327-328.

¹²⁰ Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 33. In 1835, Orson Pratt was nineteen when he became one of the original twelve Mormon apostles. Younger brother of Parley P. Pratt, Orson was devoted to the Church and to the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith. Prior to disaffecting, He served several missions faithfully and was considered a part of the inner circle of Joseph Smith. HC 2:187, 193-95, 5:252; Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography*, 43.

¹²¹ Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 226-234, 241-252; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 33.

to it himself. I will do it, said he, for there is no harm in it if her husband should never find out . . .”¹²²

He goes on to say that Smith proposed marriage to Sarah Pratt in Bennett’s presence, while her husband, Orson Pratt, was away serving a church mission in Europe.

Although the details are unknown, Bennett said Sarah eventually told her husband of Smith’s marriage proposal, which resulted in a confrontation between the two men. According to historian Richard Van Wagoner, Pratt became despondent and possibly suicidal over the rumors circulating about not only Smith’s involvement with his wife, but Bennett’s as well. Pratt was told that Smith wanted Sarah for a plural wife, while Bennett may have committed adultery with her.¹²³ Brigham Young wrote to Orson’s brother, Parley P. Pratt, while he was in England about the incident describing how Sarah Pratt had darkened the mind of her husband. Both were in open rebellion against the prophet Joseph Smith resulting in their August 1842 excommunication.¹²⁴

Furthermore, Bennett hoped to conspire with the two apostles by confiding with them in a January 1843 letter that he planned to help Missouri authorities extradite Smith to that state. Surprising Smith, Orson Pratt turned over the letter to him demonstrating his loyalty once again. This action prompted a meeting with leaders of the church to discuss Pratt’s reinstatement into the church. At the meeting, Smith said to Orson regarding the rumor about the marriage proposal to Sarah Pratt, “She lied about me, I never made the offer which she said I did.”¹²⁵ It is clear that

¹²² Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 228; Will Bagley, “Doing the Works of Abraham: Mormon Polygamy; Its origin, practice, and demise”, Vol. 9, In *Kingdom in the West: The Mormons and the American Frontier*, Edited by B. Carmon Hardy (Norman, OK: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2007), 9:52.

¹²³ Bennett, 226-234; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 30-31.

¹²⁴ Van Wagoner, 31.

¹²⁵ Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 36.

Orson Pratt struggled over plural marriage, but he eventually regained his faith, membership, apostleship, and friendship with Joseph Smith.

Not all of Bennett and Sarah Pratt's accusations against Smith were out of the realm of possibilities. For instance, it was not unusual for Smith to propose marriage to married women within his inner circle of friends. Orson and Sarah Pratt fit into that category and Bennett had been close at one time. Also, on occasion, Smith received revelations declaring that the wife of one of his friends was to be his in eternity. Once the proposal was made, however, Smith usually followed up with a series of discussions and personal religious education trainings on plural marriage.

In contrast, Smith was not known to deny that he offered marriage proposals to his inner circle of friends. On the contrary, his pattern when dealing with his close associates, whether they were reluctant or not, was to use the occasion to educate and expound the doctrine to his listeners. It is unclear why Sarah Pratt accused Smith of proposing marriage to her. Perhaps it was to hide an illicit affair from her husband with Bennett. Bennett was able to convince some women that he had authority to sleep with them. What is clear is Orson Pratt finally believed Smith and not his wife or Bennett. In time, Orson Pratt would become converted to polygamy. Sarah Pratt followed her husband to Utah, where she eventually divorced him and left the church over polygamy.

Joseph Smith and many of the early church members hailed from New England where puritan Victorian American notions of monogamous marriage were held sacred and resolute. The idea of sleeping with more than one partner was reprehensible and disgusting to these early American religionists. The problem they faced was how to implement what they believed as a command from God to practice polygamy, when the ideology of the day was that plurality of

wives was akin to adultery. A cover-up during Joseph Smith's administration was done out of embarrassment and fear that people would interpret that the practice was instituted to satisfy the lust of Mormon men. One need only to look at the example of John C. Bennett to understand the concern Joseph Smith had regarding this subject. The logic is not tenable when one realizes that it is not necessary to marry a woman to have sex with her. Why be responsible for the wives and children sired from these relationships if Mormon men only wanted sex? If the motivation was simply sexual gratification, why not do as many of the politicians did in their day, and acquire a mistress?

Chapter Two-Brigham Young, 1845-1890

During the final years in Nauvoo, the Saints under the leadership of Brigham Young completed the construction of the Nauvoo Temple, even while they all knew their home in Illinois would be temporary. Those who understood Joseph Smith's commitment to temple work continued the work he began. The only place on earth where specific ordinances could be performed had to be in Holy Temples dedicated unto God. Sacred rites and ordinances were performed for the living and the dead. Mormons believe that there are certain ordinances that must be performed in this life alone and not in the life to come. Among others, marriage for time and all eternity was one of those sacred rites for both monogamous as well as polygamous marriages. The Saints were permitted to engage in temple rites when there was no temple available, but that was the exception to the rule. With that in mind, Latter-day Saints continued the Nauvoo Temple construction while simultaneously performing these ordinances up until they departed the area to their final destination, the Rocky Mountains.¹²⁶ Soon after abandoning their beloved Temple in Nauvoo that they had worked so hard to complete, it was destroyed by

¹²⁶ Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 34-35, 78, 106.

enemies of the church. However, the spirit of the faithful followers of Joseph Smith may have been bruised but it was far from defeated. They were accustomed to being hated and rejected by outsiders. Smith's followers looked forward to finding a "place which God for [them] prepared, far away in the west, where none shall come, to hurt or make afraid . . ." ¹²⁷

Great Basin Teachings on Marriage: Practices of Polygamy

Upon his arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young, now the only person with authority from God to act in his name, not only chose the area where the pioneers would build a city, but chose the temple site to be the city's center. According to Brigham Young, salvation depended upon having temples where the sealing work was to be done, or the whole earth would be cursed at God's coming. Though other ordinances are performed in the temple, eternal marriage was on his mind. In 1853 Young described in an early sermon how uninspired *man* acquire their doctrine:

"The object of a true salvation, correctly and minutely understood, changes the course of mankind. Persons who are taught by their teachers, friends, and acquaintances, are traditionated, from their youth up, into the belief that there is no God, or intelligent beings, other than those that they see with the natural eye, or naturally comprehend; that there is no hereafter; that at death, all life and intelligence are annihilated. Such persons are as firm in their belief, and as strenuous in argument, in support of those doctrines, as others are in the belief of the existence of an Eternal God. The early customs and teachings of parents and friends, to a greater or less degree, influence the minds of children, but when they are disposed to inquire at the hands of Him who has eternal intelligence to impart to them, when their understandings are enlarged, when their minds are enlightened by the Spirit of truth, so that they can see things that are unseen by the

¹²⁷ Clayton, "Come, Come, ye Saints," LDS Hymnbook, #30. "Come, Come, ye Saints" is an LDS Hymn written by William Clayton. A close associate and scribe to Joseph Smith at the time of his martyrdom. Clayton wrote *D&C*, section 132 "Celestial Marriage" as it was dictated by Smith. He wrote the lyrics to this song to an old English tune on the trek west to the Salt Lake Valley. This song encouraged the Mormon pioneers to endure their difficulties no matter the obstacle as they made their way west. It is a favorite hymn for many Mormons today. It is in the current LDS hymn book #30; *HC* 5:501-07.

natural eye, they may then be corrected in their doctrine and belief, and in their manner of life, but not until then.”¹²⁸

By the same token, Brigham Young was convinced that the marriage customs and traditions of western culture were established by “teachers, friends, and acquaintances” not to mention uninspired ministers. In other words, marriage guidelines for American western culture was not established by the Eternal God but had been “...traditionated...from their youth up” to believe that monogamy was the only marriage allowed by God. For Brigham Young, the higher law was plural marriage and it was time for the whole world to know it.

Like Joseph Smith, Brigham Young used private meetings in various localities to teach his interpretation of religious education on the subject of Mormon marriage. However, unlike Smith, Young eventually went public with the doctrine of polygamy. His methodology would be different, simply because Young and other Mormon leaders had more opportunities to teach Mormon marriage practices from the pulpit as well as in private counsel. The Mormon pulpit was an effective tool in teaching religious education regarding church doctrine, including Mormon marriage customs. Other religious education material printed for church or school curriculums would undoubtedly come from the various sermons and/or church periodicals and newspapers issued by the Church hierarchy. A new form of religious education on marriage was developed and practiced by Utah Mormons during Brigham Young’s tenure

Public Announcement: Polygamy

On July 24, 1847 the first Mormon pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. Over time, the westward migration of Mormon pioneers continued to establish settlements throughout Utah and other western states. U.S. President Millard Fillmore appointed Brigham Young as territorial governor as Mormons enjoyed a respite of peace for about ten years. In 1852, Brigham Young

¹²⁸ JD, 1:2.

must have felt encouraged by the prospects for his church because he had Apostle Orson Pratt publicly announce polygamy as an existing practice among Mormons. Many nuanced reasons were given by Pratt in his sermon to justify polygamy.¹²⁹ Public religious education on Celestial Marriage or polygamy in Utah began with Orson Pratt's sermon from the pulpit on August 29, 1852 in Salt Lake City.

It is reasonable to conclude that Pratt's arguments in favor of plural marriage were sanctioned by Brigham Young as well as the Prophet Joseph Smith, since both were part of Smith's inner circle in the Nauvoo period. Also, both men were enamored with Joseph Smith because of their belief that he was an instrument in the hands of God... It is interesting to note, both Pratt and Young initially found the doctrine of plural marriage distasteful when they initially heard it taught by Smith, but now both were totally converted to the notion. Pratt had once left the church over polygamy. Pratt later became known as the "Apostle of Polygamy" mainly because Brigham Young assigned him the task of explaining its doctrine to the world due to his strong stance and ability for rational public debate regarding this subject. When non-Mormon ministers came to Salt Lake City, Young tended to send Pratt to debate the issue. Perhaps Young's following statement will help us understand why he chose Pratt over himself to explain this peculiar doctrine. In a moment of self-reflection and humility Brigham Young said, "I am aware that my language fails to convey my ideas to you as I could wish."¹³⁰ Young obviously had doubts about his own public speaking abilities but had full confidence in Pratt.

¹²⁹ Pratt, *The Seer*, 7-16, 25-32, 41-48, 58-64, 73-80, 89-96, 105-11, 122-28, 135-44, 152-60, 169-92; JD, 1:53-66; JD, 11:220-222; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 85.

¹³⁰ JD, 1:119; Pratt, *The Seer*, 2; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 47, 85. First Presidency Letter of Appointment contained therein. This statement by Young may also help to explain other statements he made in sermons that became controversial for historians and enemies of the church. JD, 1:50 "Adam-God Theory; 3:246-47 "Blood Atonement."

According to Orson Pratt, his audience in his first public address on the subject was described as those who “embraced the doctrine of a plurality of wives, as a part of their religious faith.” That would imply that the full membership who followed Brigham Young west was taught the principles of polygamy by Joseph Smith himself or by one of his associates before they left Nauvoo or perhaps very soon after their arrival in Salt Lake Valley. The fact that the majority of Saints, about fifteen thousand, went on the three-thousand-mile trek and submitted to the hardship of pioneer life meant if they were not converted to the notion of plural marriage, they at least tolerated it. In his first sermon on the subject he emphasized that God instituted the practice of polygamy “. . . not, as many have supposed . . . to gratify the carnal lusts and feelings of man; that is not the object of the doctrine.” The “. . . constitution”, says Pratt, “gives the privilege to all the inhabitants of this country . . . the free exercise of their religious notions, and the freedom of their faith, and the practice of it . . .” He seems to predict what would happen if the U.S. government ever enacted laws to restrict them from the free exercise of this part of their religion, such laws must be unconstitutional.

Pratt continued that plural marriage was instituted “as a part of our religion, and necessary for our exaltation to the fullness of the Lord's glory in the eternal world.” It is an essential gospel doctrine for anybody, male or female, that seeks a “fullness of happiness in the world to come.” He went on to explain that the Latter-day Saints have a “peculiar doctrine” regarding the pre-existence of mankind that differs with the Christian world. The spirits of all human beings ever born into mortality in earthly bodies were created first as spirits long before this planet was created. Some essence of human beings always existed in one form or another. We all came to earth as part of “God’s plan to inhabit worlds without end.”¹³¹

¹³¹ *JD*, 1:54; Pratt, *The Seer*, 12-14, 30, 111-12, 125, 138-39; *JD*, 11:220-

On this occasion as well as others, Pratt educated the already believing members in a doctrine that many of them had heard before, but repetition is a common part of religious education among Mormons. The doctrine that he expounded was that as part of God's plan, people have the potential to become as God; omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. Once men and women pass their earthly test they will be granted permission to create worlds and people them with their sons and daughters just as God does. According to Mormonism, one of God's prime goals for his people is to procreate, and a greater number of children glorifies a couple(s) heritage. The greater number of wives will give families a greater potential for many more children. Creating sons and daughters for peopling worlds without end is what glorifies God; the same is true for God's children who follow his plan for procreation. In other words, there is a plurality of God's in Mormon theology.¹³²

Moreover, based on the faithfulness of certain pre-existent spirits, some people were chosen to carry out the plan of God. Abraham was identified as one of the "great ones" who was chosen to do the works of God. Joseph Smith was also identified by Pratt as one of the "great ones" destined to do a great work for God. One aspect of obedience for both of these men, was accepting God's command to marry more than one wife. Pratt says that like Abraham, those who keep the commandment to engage in plurality of wives "inherit the blessings and promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and receive continuation of [their] posterity, that they may become as numerous as the sand upon the seashore." One need only to think of the numerous people today who are connected to Abraham either by blood or adoption to understand what Pratt is

222; *JD*, 25:227-29; *JD*, 26:339-43; Stan Larson, ed., *Prisoner For Polygamy: The Memoirs and Letters of Rudger Clawson at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, 1884-87* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 1993), 2; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 85.

¹³² *JD*, 1:54-57; *JD*, 15:251-52; *JD*, 15:319-22; *JD*, 15:319-22; Pratt, *The Seer*, 25, 138-40.

saying. All three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) trace their heritage either directly or indirectly to Abraham, a polygamist. According to Pratt, God ordained marriage not only for this life, but for all eternity. The object of marriage between men and women is to “multiply and replenish the earth;”¹³³ and to have eternal increase in the worlds to come. Pratt said, “...not only sons [and daughters] of God, but Gods themselves.”¹³⁴

Pratt estimated that only one-fifth of the population of the world during his day practiced monogamy, while four-fifths in 1852 participated in a polygamist lifestyle. Polygamy was handed down from one generation to the next since before records were kept. Monogamy, says Orson Pratt, robs parents of the blessings of Abraham. The number of children one has indicates his or her glory, their kingdom, and dominion.¹³⁵

Polygamy Raises a Righteous Generation

Because all nations are corrupt, Latter-day Saints are commissioned to go on missions throughout the world and gather out all people who will “hearken to His voice,” and accept the restored gospel by being baptized and relocating to Mormon communities. By moving to LDS centers, Mormons can more easily “be instructed in the right way, and brought to the knowledge of the truth . . .” It makes sense that God’s chosen people [Mormons] who have the fullness of truth would see themselves as better suited to raising children the “right way” than any other people on earth. They have the “road map” to make it back to heaven. As already mentioned, the spirits of men and women had a previous existence in the heavens in the presence of God. Many of them were “noble, more intelligent than others” and they were:

¹³³ Gen. 1:27-28 (AV), 9:1 (AV); Abraham 4:28 (Pearl of Great Price).

¹³⁴ *JD*, 1:57-59; 13:183-196; Pratt, *The Seer*, 58, 105-07; *JD*, 13:37-42; *JD*, 13:197-209; *JD*, 24:160-63; *JD*, 24:243-44; *JD*, 25:227-29; *JD*, 26:339-43; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 201-202, 204-205.

¹³⁵ *JD*, 1:60-61.

“reserved until the dispensation of the fullness of times, to come forth through a noble parentage that shall train their young and tender minds in the truths of eternity, that they may grow up in the Lord, and be strong in the power of His might, be clothed upon with His glory, be filled with exceeding great faith...and among the Saints is the most likely place for these spirits to take their tabernacles, through a just and righteous parentage . . . there to be trained up properly, according to their nobility and intelligence, and according to the laws which the Lord ordained before they were born . . . [that] they may be raised up among the righteous.”¹³⁶

According to Pratt, God chose his most obedient and trusted servants who had proven themselves with their sacrifice and acceptance of his true gospel to bring numerous other faithful children from heaven to earth through plural marriage. Polygamy is a “true” principle permitted by God to increase the number of children that could come down from heaven into homes of faithful members of his church whom God trusted to teach his children the correct way to live “like unto the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob of old—like those who lived in ancient times, who walked in my footsteps, and kept my commands . . .”¹³⁷ In all reality, polygamy was a means for religious education. Brigham Young expressed how impactful learning in the home is, then Pratt says Polygamy is a way to bring more children into a righteous home. The two together show the potential for religious education on a familial level, likely the most impactful level possible to these educators.

Therefore, as Orson Pratt outlined in his first sermon regarding the advantages of polygamy, the only reason given in holy writ why the Lord instituted plural marriage, was to “raise up seed unto me [God]” (Jacob 2:27-30) or a “righteous generation.”¹³⁸ Pratt’s standard for a “righteous generation” is one who serves God and keeps his Commandments according to

¹³⁶ *JD*, 1:62-63; *JD*, 26:342; Hyrum Andrus, “Doctrines of the Kingdom”, Vol. 3, in *Foundations of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Inc., 1973), 468-69; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 85.

¹³⁷ *JD*, 1:59-63; *JD*, 13:183-196; Pratt, *The Seer*, 135-39; *JD*, 13:197-209; *JD*, 14:320-21; *JD*, 25:227-29; *JD*, 26:339-41; Larson, *Prisoner For Polygamy*, 2; Van Wagoner, 85.

¹³⁸ *JD*, 1:59-63.

Mormon beliefs. The righteous generation they were trying to produce is evident when one notes how many current members of the Mormon hierarchy are products of polygamy. In Mormon theology, it is hard to imagine someone more righteous than prophets both ancient and present day. It should be pointed out; Jesus Christ, the most righteous being who ever lived, was a product of plural marriage. Christ was an Israelite from the tribe of Judah. Judah was the fourth son of Jacob and his first wife, Leah.¹³⁹ Pratt even hypothesized that Jesus had a polygamous relationship with Mary, Martha, and Mary Magdalene. He posited that it would be “natural for a husband [Jesus] in the resurrection to appear first to his own dear wives [Mary Magdalene, et. al.], and afterwards show himself to his other friends [Disciples].”¹⁴⁰

Prostitution

Pratt believed plural marriage would solve the problem of societal immorality. There are many women who have fallen into the snare of prostitution. They lack opportunities to move ahead in the financial world and find themselves giving in to this dangerous and immoral lifestyle. According to Pratt, if all or most of the prostitutes were happily married to a righteous man who would care for their needs and provide a moral support system, prostitution would decrease dramatically. Also, Pratt suggested that plural marriage would reduce the need that some men see in being tempted to stray in their marriage. If a man was looking for intimate self-gratification, then being lawfully wedded to more women might be a logical solution to his dilemma.¹⁴¹

Admittedly, this reason for entering plural marriage does not seem to be motivated by good intentions. However, Pratt makes good logic with his analogy of supply and demand theory

¹³⁹ Gen. 29:32-35 (AV).

¹⁴⁰ *JD*, 1:59-62; Pratt, *The Seer*, 42-43, 159; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 85.

¹⁴¹ Pratt, *The Seer*, 124.

to reduce prostitution. If the supply of prostitution was reduced by marrying them into plural marriage, the demand by men would have to necessarily decrease because there would be no more prostitutes available. In theory, one can conclude that there would be an increase in societal morals. This is how the Lord solved the problem anciently, by giving his faithful servants a plurality of wives and raising their children to keep the commandments of God. However, if one's children failed to be obedient their names were to be "blotted out [excommunicated] from under heaven, that they may have no place among the people of God."¹⁴²

God's Polygamy Restricted

In instituting polygamy, the Lord did not leave it to chance and have mankind come up with its own way of doing these things. Said Pratt, God set up strict rules and guidelines to keep the law of plurality from being abused and misused. It would be a disaster to allow mere men to decide how to conduct themselves in marriage with no restrictions. Even good devout men would be unable to control themselves because "man is a natural enemy to God unless he yields to the enticing of the Holy Spirit."¹⁴³ God's faithful polygamists anciently were restricted as well. The Prophet Nathan from the Old Testament called King David to repentance for disobedience to the law of chastity. David lost his wives that he married and inherited from King Saul because he committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband, Uriah. David was told his wives would be given to another due to his unfaithfulness. Had David been faithful to the polygamist restrictions God placed on him, he would have been given additional wives. During the time of David, Nathan the Prophet was the only person on earth who had keys or power to permit God's children to marry additional wives.

¹⁴² *JD*, 1:59-62; Pratt, *The Seer*, 42-43, 123-24; *JD*, 11:37-42, 183-209, 243-44, 339-43.

¹⁴³ Mosiah 3:19 (Book of Mormon).

Likewise, in 1852, “there is but one man in the world, at the same time, who can hold the keys of this matter” and who has authority to ask whether or not any man has a right to follow in the footsteps of Abraham of old by entering into plural marriage. “[H]e holds the keys of these matters now, the same as Nathan, in his day . . .” This information was revealed to “our Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, Joseph Smith, on the 12th day of July, 1843 . . .”¹⁴⁴

“He held the keys of these matters . . . and the Lord has set bounds and restrictions to these things; He has told us in that revelation, that only one man can hold these keys upon the earth at the same time; and they belong to that man who stands at the head to preside over all the affairs of the Church and kingdom of God in the last days.”¹⁴⁵

It was Elijah the prophet who was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire in mortality who visited the prophet Joseph Smith as an immortal Angel of God in the Kirtland Temple in 1836. His visit was necessary to restore the “sealing keys of power” to the Prophet. Elijah held other keys as well for this dispensation, but the sealing key was what enabled Joseph Smith to institute polygamy. Elijah spoke directly to Joseph giving him strict instructions on rules and regulations for those entering plural marriage.

According to Pratt, Elijah informed Joseph Smith that if one is commanded through the Lords prophet to participate in plural marriage and they reject it, “they will be damned . . . saith the Lord God Almighty.” Pratt explained that the reason for damnation (a stop to a person’s eternal progression much like water is stopped by a physical damn) is “where much is given, much is required.” When great knowledge is revealed for the benefit and happiness of human beings, and they reject it for whatever reason, God is not pleased. If they were not ready for the information God would not have commanded them. Rejection to whatever he requires demonstrates not only

¹⁴⁴ *JD*, 1:63-64; *JD*, 13:183-196; *JD*, 13:197-209; *JD*, 15:319-22; Pratt, *The Seer*, 25-31; *JD*, 14:320-21; *JD*, 24:160-63; *JD*, 25:227-29.

¹⁴⁵ *JD*, 1:64.

an insult to God, but it is a person's refusal to progress toward "eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God."¹⁴⁶

Earth life is a probationary state, a time to prepare to meet God, not to disobey him or refuse to be blessed. It's like a little child that refuses to eat his/her vegetables. However, a little child does not know any better. Adults are expected to do what is good for them whether or not one likes it or even that one understands it. By the same token, learning how to live with a plurality of wives and training numerous children to be righteous by following God helps human beings become like God. Marriage was instituted by God to help people grow toward a better life. By rejecting the principles of marriage "He has ordained for their good, they are worthy of damnation, and the Lord has said they shall be damned." Had Joseph Smith refused God's command to engage in plural marriage, the prophet himself would have been damned. Said Pratt, "With all the knowledge and light he had, he must comply with it, or, says the Lord unto him, you shall be damned; and the same is true in regard to all those who reject these things."¹⁴⁷

Moreover, not only will those who reject plural marriage be damned, but also those who enter a monogamous marriage but fail through carelessness or a lack of faith to seal the marriage for eternity will suffer the same fate. Further, Pratt posited that anybody deciding upon themselves to be polygamists without permission from on high (presiding Elder-Brigham Young) will be punished. It does no good to believe someone has the power to seal a marriage for eternity, if the person in reality did not receive the proper authority. Those who do not go through the President of the Lords church, Pratt said, "...will never have the privilege of possessing that which is possessed by the Gods that hold the keys of power..." because "all oaths, all covenants, and all

¹⁴⁶ D&C, 14:7.

¹⁴⁷ JD, 1:64; JD, 15:251-52; JD, 17:151-53; Pratt, *The Seer*, 25-31; JD, 13:37-42; JD, 11:220-222; JD, 26:319; JD, 24:160-63; JD, 25:227-29; JD, 26:341.

agreements...that have been made by man, and not by me, and by the authority I have established, shall cease when death shall separate the parties; that is the end.” Nobody will be able to claim a spouse in the resurrection because they were married on earth, unless that marriage was sealed in the house of the Lord by the proper authority with permission granted from the current High Priest, the Church President. Unless the marriage whether monogamous or polygamous is done in the prescribed manner the marriage covenant is invalid.

Pratt further explained that those who are damned may be angels since they failed to be valiant for the cause of Christ. Angels who did not obey the law will be ministering servants unto those who are worthy of obtaining a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory . . . they shall remain singly and separately . . . they are not Gods . . . but . . . servants to the Gods . . . Gods are exalted...they will propagate their species.” There will be many foolish people who think they are wise that refuse to listen to the prophet. They will never be allowed to multiply “like the sand upon the seashore” because they reject “the new and everlasting covenant in its fullness.”¹⁴⁸

Shortage of Men

Pratt offers additional possibilities why God commanded Latter-day Saints to practice polygamy. Pratt suggested there are more women born into mortality than there are men, and therefore, some women will never receive a proposal of marriage. Should they be left without a husband, simply because there were not enough men to go around? Pratt believed that it would be much better for women to be married to a faithful man, than for them to remain single for eternity, even if the husband was already married.¹⁴⁹ Richard and Joan Ostling counter Pratt. In

¹⁴⁸ *JD*, 1:65; 13:183-196; *JD*, 15:251-52; *JD*, 15:319-22; *JD*, 17:151-53; *JD*, 13:37-42; *JD*, 14:320-21; *JD*, 24:160-63; *JD*, 26:319; *JD*, 25:227-29; Pratt, *The Seer*, 25-31.

¹⁴⁹ Pratt, *The Seer*, 58-9.

their *Mormon America* they said, “There typically was a shortage of women on the frontier.”¹⁵⁰

However, Annie Clark Tanner gave a different description of the frontier in Utah. She said,

“Hundreds of young women came from the overcrowded section in the old country. They were thoroughly converted to the Gospel. To be the wife of a fine leader in Israel was the height of their ambition. Perhaps too, the effect of the increase in numbers it furnished to the Church was considered of some advantage. It must be remembered that the western immigration movement brought to Utah all kinds of people. Concerning some of the men folks, girls comparing their chances for matrimony, often said of a Mormon leader, ‘I’d rather have his little finger than the whole of a man outside of the Church.’”¹⁵¹

Pratt quoted Isaiah 4:1 illustrating what might happen at some future day, due to a shortage of men, “In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying . . . let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach.”

It is a fact that many men have died in battle due to wars, since they are the ones most likely to be enlisted in battle. It seems reasonable that there would be a shortage of men in the world available for marriage. Pratt asks the question, “What will become of these females?”¹⁵² The implication is clear, Pratt thought a woman needs a husband to survive in the world. For Pratt, the thought of a woman alone in the world for a long period of time was not a pleasant one. A worse thought, according to Pratt, was a woman who died without being married, and who would have to spend eternity without being connected to a husband. To understand the importance of marriage in Mormon theology, Pratt quoted the Apostle Paul, “Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord.”¹⁵³ In Pratt’s mind, heaven was best only if one had a marriage partner in the next life, and it is even greater the more wives are attached to a husband.

¹⁵⁰ Ostling and Ostling, *Mormon America*, 59.

¹⁵¹ Annie Clark Tanner, *A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography by Annie Clark Tanner* (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund and University of Utah Library, 1991), 23.

¹⁵² Pratt, *The Seer*, 58.

¹⁵³ 1 Cor. 11:11, (AV); Pratt, *The Seer*, 58-59.

Increase Family Wealth

In addition, Pratt posits the notion that the plurality system would have a tendency to increase family wealth. An interesting comment from one who was considered far from financially sound, with Pratt's large family of ten wives and many children. However, the idea is plausible, if a member of the family is financially astute. Think of a large family working hard together, being united in a business venture. As opposed to the same number of individuals acting separate out of each person's self-interest. If every adult member was employed, a large family could acquire more wealth than a small family.¹⁵⁴ Annie Clark Tanner, a polygamous Mormon wife, suggested that failure or success of a polygamous family rested on wealth within the family. Tanner said,

If a father could provide the needs of a family, there was much more likelihood for contentment. If he could not, which was the usual case, even that had its advantages. In that case, the children must learn to work for means to satisfy their desires and perhaps get their own education. Thus, habits of industry and thrift were developed.¹⁵⁵

Pratt could have been talking about the potential wealth of having more adults producing wealth and consolidating within the family, or the increased ability of children who were produced through eugenic procreation. Tanner further states, "Those valuable traits coupled with inherent capacity which may be the result of eugenic mating, accounts in part at least, for the leadership and success observed in the children of a polygamist's family." She seems to be endorsing the latter, that children of polygamy had superior traits, including increased strength economically.

New Testament Polygamy

Moreover, Orson Pratt argued convincingly that the New Testament scriptures favor plural marriage. He said there is a strong indication that polygamy was in full force during and

¹⁵⁴ Pratt, *The Seer*, 122.

¹⁵⁵ Tanner, *A Mormon Mother*, 24.

after Christ's ministry. According to Pratt, the Savior came to earth as a mortal man at the time of the Mosaic Law. One of the laws required a man, married or otherwise, to marry his deceased brothers' widow and raise up a family to him. Jesus Christ and his disciples denounced and warned against many sins, but not once was plural marriage condemned. There is evidence that Bishops and Deacons were counseled to have only one wife, but that had more to do with the limitations that an extra wife and family would bring to their priesthood office than anything related to a denunciation of polygamy. If it was truly wrong, why not denounce it plainly and boldly.¹⁵⁶

Polygamy Developed Independent Women

It is difficult to envision polygamy as harmonious and healthy, especially during the persecution years. Annie Clark Tanner stated, "It is difficult to picture the unsettled conditions in Utah and Idaho during the raid against polygamists. Homes were broken up and families scattered among relatives or friends."¹⁵⁷ Notwithstanding the situation, plural marriage had definite benefits to women. Mormon women were more individualistic and autonomous because they were forced to act as head of the house in the absence of their husbands. Some of them were able to pursue professional careers becoming a part of the economy. Also, their political defense of polygamy gave them knowledge about the process that would prove invaluable experience to engage in other future political fights regarding women's rights issues. As Lawrence Foster stated in *Women of Covenant*, "indirectly and almost in spite of itself, Mormon polygamy in the late nineteenth century contributed to a greater degree of autonomy and political activism among the women of the church."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Pratt, *The Seer*, 122-128.

¹⁵⁷ Tanner, *A Mormon Mother*, 75.

¹⁵⁸ Derr, *Women of Covenant*, 137; Thomas W. Simpson, *American*

Women being autonomous and individualistic led to a change in religious education among Mormons. Women were expected to be a large part of the education in the home. Because the polygamous father had many responsibilities, women had to step up. Annie Clark Tanner said of her experience as a plural wife, “I had the attitude of many Mormon women in polygamy. I felt the responsibility of my family, and I developed an independence that women in monogamy never know.”¹⁵⁹ However, Tanner admitted there is a trade off in choosing polygamy over monogamy. Said Tanner,

“It is needless to observe that monogamous marriages are by far the more successful. They give security and confidence, and these are the requirements for happiness. Security and confidence are more akin to love in marriage than freedom and independence. Though as ‘love fulfilleth the law’ there can be freedom and a degree of independence in monogamy as well.”¹⁶⁰

It is clear that Annie Clark Tanner was not enamored with polygamy. She had lived it and observed first hand its differences with monogamy and she determined monogamy was a superior form of marriage. However, her husband chose to live apart from her, and eventually abandoned her and the children. This type of husband might scare any woman from thinking their particular lifestyle marriage was wrong, be they polygamous or monogamous. If Tanner was alive today, she probably would say that monogamy was not beneficial to marriage when she observed the divorce rate in today’s society. By today’s standards, Joseph Tanner would simply be another “deadbeat” dad. He separated himself from his family for years and eventually abandoned his wife and children for good. In contemporary society, Annie would have every right to sue her husband for alimony and child support.¹⁶¹ If Annie Clark Tanner had a positive

Universities and the Birth of Modern Mormonism, 1867-1940 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 16-25.

¹⁵⁹ Tanner, *A Mormon Mother*, 269; Simpson, *American Universities*, 16-25.

¹⁶⁰ Tanner, 272.

¹⁶¹ Tanner, 236.

experience with being a plural wife, she may have had a different perspective on Celestial Marriage.

Generally, polygamous marriages were happiest when each wife had her own home and plenty of provisions for everyone to live comfortably.¹⁶² How is that different from monogamous relationships? Each individual family member needs to feel secure in their environment. Financial pressures and lack of provisions, or not having a roof over one's head could understandably cause tension and disharmony in any relationship. Obviously, being financially solvent would be an advantage to any family, but it is not necessary. In my estimation, the best polygamous arrangement was orchestrated by Orson Smith and his family. According to Stephanie Goodson, "Orson Smith established his three families in separate homes, but the lots were joined together. Margaret Smith Watson wrote of the arrangement, 'Orson provided all sorts of amusements and sports for his twenty-seven children, and they had their pleasures in the home.'"¹⁶³ He spent a week with each household, and still managed to visit each family daily for prayers, family meetings, and counsel. Apparently, the children were well-adjusted and grew up not knowing inequality between the families.¹⁶⁴ This was an ideal polygamous family that seemed to be highly successful. The strain in a family relationship common to many polygamous homes was likely caused from separation and neglect by the father and husband, and it was not evident in all polygamous homes as is evident from the example of Orson Smith.

¹⁶² Claudia Bushman, ed. "Plural Wives", By Stephanie Smith Goodson in *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1997), 99.

¹⁶³ C. Bushman, 100.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

Brigham Young's Follow Up to Pratt

Six months after Orson Pratt began public religious education on the practice of plural marriage, Brigham Young interjected a couple of items in support of Pratt's comments. He reiterated that an "endless seed" Abrahamic promise is for every faithful man [and woman] who serves God with all his or her heart, builds up his kingdom [the LDS Church] and obeys his commandments. Those people who do these things will never stop having an increase in their family. In other words, raising children in an ideal marriage partnership where only truth and goodness are taught and lived is not only heavenly, but it is the only way to find complete happiness in the eternities, worlds without end. This was the same promise "made unto the Savior . . ." ¹⁶⁵ In LDS theology, Jesus Christ is humanity's spirit elder brother who volunteered to sacrifice himself to save his younger brothers and sisters from both physical and spiritual death. The resurrection accomplishes the first for all human beings regardless of faith or lack thereof. The latter is merit based given exclusively to the obedient. Certainly Pratt and Young believed obedience to plural marriage was part of that equation. ¹⁶⁶

Moreover, as key holder and the only one authorized to give permission to the members of the LDS community, Brigham Young described that men have "privately" asked for his blessing in plural marriage. His response may have surprised them,

" . . . it is not the privilege of any Elder to have even one wife, before he has honored his Priesthood, before he has magnified his calling. If you obtain one, it is by mere permission, to see what you will do, how you will act, whether you will conduct yourself in righteousness in that holy estate. TAKE CARE! Elders of Israel, be cautious! Or you will lose your wives and your children." ¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ JD, 1:119.

¹⁶⁶ JD, 1:57-63; Pratt, *The Seer*, 13-15, 80, 106-107.

¹⁶⁷ JD, 1:119; JD, 15:319-22; Pratt, *The Seer*, 25-31.

He continued by saying that men must never abuse their wives in any manner. If an Elder ignores the mandate by treating his wives with disrespect and refuses to provide for their emotional and physical needs with food and shelter, he will suffer consequences on judgment day. A Mormon married man who breaks his promise to God regarding his wives and offspring “will be left wifeless and childless; you will have no increase in eternity . . . and it can never come to you again, *never*, NO NEVER!”¹⁶⁸

According to Young, the privilege of being sealed to more than one wife is reserved for those men who have proved themselves, who are above reproach. Their lives as servants of God are an asset to the Lord. When asked by church leaders to do an assignment, they do it without hesitation and to the best of their ability. They have proved themselves to the Lord by demonstrating their willingness to do whatever is asked of them. This type of person is full of integrity and loves righteousness more than life itself; he or she does good deeds continually. According to Mormon Theology, someone with these attributes who lives their religious beliefs is on the path that leads to perfection or Godhood. The reward for such is many wives and children as they reach the ultimate destination, Godhood. Brigham Young said, “. . . for it is a principle which existed with God in all eternities . . . to *exalt* man, and *bring* him into His *presence*, and *make* him like unto *Himself*! It is such a man's privilege to have wives and children, and neighbors, and friends, who wish to be sealed to him.”¹⁶⁹

Young admitted that many men in the church will or have applied to have the privilege of marrying additional wives. His advice to all potential polygamists is to be careful what you ask,

¹⁶⁸ *JD*, 1:119. Spousal and child abuse is not condoned within the LDS Church, especially by husbands and fathers as reiterated by the 1995 First Presidency Message, *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*, accessed October 20, 2017. <https://www.lds.org/topics/family-proclamation>.

¹⁶⁹ *JD*, 1:120; *JD*, 24:160-63. Only faithful men receive extra wives and children. *JD*, 1:20.

because “. . . Nothing would damn such men sooner than to give them this privilege.” Only the most righteous men who honor their priesthood should get this privilege of practicing plural marriage. Only men who have done all in their power to serve God by building up his kingdom have proved himself worthy to be a polygamist and to have eternal increase or eternal children in the life to come. Others less valiant may prosper for a time, but their success is short lived. Eventually sin catches up to those serving God with mediocrity and the disobedient fall short of the glory of God. On “Judgment Day” they receive a lesser degree of glory than those who have tried with all their heart, might, mind, and strength.¹⁷⁰

Heber C. Kimball on Polygamy

Heber C. Kimball corroborated Brigham Young’s statement to the church. Kimball stated, “. . .this is his [Young’s] house, and this is his people, and he is our leader, our Governor, he is our Prophet, and he is our Priest . . . when . . . [Sheep] are sent . . . by the shepherd that God has stationed here; he is the head shepherd that is visible on earth, under the direction of Joseph.”¹⁷¹ As President, Young is responsible for sending his missionaries into the world to gather his sheep back home where they can be integrated into the fold. None of these missionaries has his permission to take wives from his flock and make covenants and promises of marriage before they are brought home. If you want a wife or two, permission must be asked of the head shepherd, in this case President Young. If one takes a wife in any other way “. . . you will get your fingers burnt.”¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ *JD*, 1:120; *JD*, 15:319-22. Less valiant polygamist men who don’t take their responsibilities seriously will be damned. Responsibility damns men who become “slackers.” *JD*, 1:120.

¹⁷¹ *JD*, 1:207; Pratt, *JD*, 1:64.

¹⁷² *JD*, 1:207.

Moreover, continued Kimball, just as any person would be incensed if something of theirs was taken without permission, Brigham Young and by extension Heavenly Father would be displeased if someone married one of his children without asking for permission. Kimball stated, “. . . I would rather have my head laid upon a block, and severed from my shoulders, than ever make a proposal to any woman living upon the earth and marry her, unless I had permission from the chief shepherd [Brigham Young] . . .”¹⁷³ The following story illustrates the importance of obtaining proper permission and proving one’s self to the Lord. It is also an example of how unorthodox marriage customs were instituted in nineteenth century Mormon America.

Richardson Family: Nuanced Marriage

Edmund and Mary Ann Richardson and their two children, George and Emma, set out with family and friends bound for Oregon on April 1, 1853. Nothing seemed to go as planned. Their journey was fraught with many challenges not the least of which was the demise of all of their Oxen. So important were Oxen to their long arduous journey west, they dare not attempt to finish the trek without resupplies. They were a religious people of the Presbyterian sect. In fact, the journey west to Oregon in part is a search for a place to worship where religious freedom is recognized. Now they were forced to choose a detour to the Salt Lake Valley, while the other wagons continued the journey without them. They had already been warned about the Indians on the warpath and the “ferocious” Mormons who lived in that area. However, they had to risk it so they could obtain provisions if they were to continue to their final destination, Oregon. In 1853, they arrived in Salt Lake City and to their surprise were greeted with hospitality from Mormon

¹⁷³ *JD*, 1:207.

Pioneers. The Richardson's became quickly impressed with the religious tenets taught by the members and were converted to the LDS faith.

For the next few years the Richardson's set out to demonstrate their faithfulness to their newfound religion. Each of them tended to accept difficult church assignments with willing and cheerful dispositions no matter how challenging the task. They donated money to help poor foreigners immigrate to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Edmund "gave time and means toward readying teams and wagons to go to the assistance of oncoming emigrant trains." He volunteered to perform sometimes "arduous and dangerous assignments." For instance, the Richardson's accepted the assignment to relocate to Manti, Utah even though "it meant facing poverty, hardships, and Indian dangers." Edmund and Mary Ann were what Young might call faithful and diligent Latter-day Saints who "had fulfilled his every assignment."¹⁷⁴ Based on the information discussed thus far, Edmund Richardson was the type of man that deserved a blessing from the Lord. And bless him he did, but not in the way many people would suspect including the Richardson's.

On April 20, 1857, the Richardson's waited for Brigham to seal their marriage in his office in Manti and to interview and receive a blessing at his hand. Due to the long distance from Salt Lake City, Young often accommodated couples who could not take a long journey from their home in various parts of Utah. Having recently arrived in Manti, Young sealed the couple's marriage for time and all eternity:

"Edmund and Mary Ann stood in the President's office and listened to the Lord, by the voice of His Prophet, seal them, 'man and wife for time and all eternity!' The entire room seemed charged with the Spirit of the Holy Ghost! Never again would life be the

¹⁷⁴ Annie Richardson Johnson, Elva R. Shumway, and Enola Johnson Mangelson, *Charles Edmund Richardson: Man of Destiny*, (Tempe, AZ: Publication Services, 1982), 25-34.

same! Now their relationship as husband and wife spanned the power of the grave and love became even more sacred.”¹⁷⁵

As Edmund and Mary Ann contemplated the significance of their new and everlasting covenant of marriage they listened to the prophet of the Lord explain their new obligations in marriage. Brigham Young explained they were under the Abrahamic covenant now with the blessing of eternal increase.

Edmund felt his heart stop as President Young announced, “It is the duty of every righteous man and woman to prepare tabernacles for all the spirits they can. . .”¹⁷⁶ Brigham Young directed his comments to Mary Ann and the other mothers who were there, “Is it not a blessing to you mothers to raise up men filled with the glory of God, to go forth and extend His work?” After which he told Edmund and the other husbands present:

“We understand that we are able to be made kings and priests unto God. . . Now, if I am made the king and lawgiver to my family, and if I have many sons, I shall become the father of many fathers, for they will have sons, and their sons will have sons, and so on from generation to generation, and in that way I may become the father of many fathers, or the king of many kings — or whatever the Father sees fit to confer upon me.”¹⁷⁷

Edmund felt ashamed for decisions he had made before joining the church. Mary Ann and Edmund never intended to have more than two children. Once the children, George and Emma, were born before their trek west, Edmund “. . . confessed before the Lord and his prophet, that in following the false teachings of his former religion and society, he had become a eunuch-priest, and more family was impossible.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Richardson, *Man of Destiny*, 25.

¹⁷⁶ Richardson, *Man of Destiny*, 26.

¹⁷⁷ John A. Widtsoe, ed., *Discourses of Brigham Young: Second President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954), 95.

¹⁷⁸ Richardson, 28.

After being informed of their problem, Young remembered how faithful the Richardson's had been in building up the Kingdom of God. Knowing the integrity of their souls, Young declared, "Brother and Sister Richardson . . . the teachings and work of the devil have taken away your posterity. But the teachings and authority of Christ can restore it, if you are willing to make great sacrifices for it." The only way to increase the Richardson family in this life would have to be by proxy. Young explained the unthinkable, they would have to get a civil divorce, and Edmund must allow for another man to marry his wife for a short period of time. Enough time for children to be born into the Richardson family. According to Young, the children from this civil union with another "righteous" man would belong to Edmund and Mary Ann because their marriage was sealed for eternity.

As could be expected, the Richardson's were devastated. The thought of another man, even for time, coming between them was beyond words. At first, they refused to follow the plan and went home knowing in their hearts they could never accept such a plan. The Richardson's were content with the knowledge their family would never increase in this life. However, both found it difficult to sleep that night. Several attempts were made, but rest escaped them the entire night. Moreover, the peace that normally came to them from the Holy Spirit after other important decisions were made failed to give them comfort. "Over and over each relived the interview in the president's office and searched his soul in the light of its implications." For Mary Ann, not having her husband there to protect, support and love her was bad enough. But to sleep with another man was completely out of the question. This notion violated her strict moral sensibilities. Edmund struggled with three ". . . factors: his love for his wife, his desire for more family, and his mistake."

In addition, the thought of being separated from his wife caused him “loneliness beyond expression.” What would become of his family, who would protect them, who would provide for their needs, were just some of the questions that passed through Edmund’s mind. The thought of another man in her life was unbearable. In contrast, the look on Mary Ann’s face when she held children that were not her own revealed the pain he caused her when she realized they could never have more children in this life. If there ever was a sacrifice too heavy to bear, this seemed like it. Edmund realized he had failed his wife when he became a eunuch. His mistake was final, unless he yielded to the plan set forth by the key holder, the prophet of the Lord. Finally, together they knelt in prayer to ask God for help in making their decision. When the prayer ended they felt peace for the first time since they were informed of the plan; sleep followed soon after. Both had seen a vision from God that Young’s plan for their eternal increase was divinely inspired.

In the morning, joy filled their souls as they made their way back to President Young’s office. Brigham Young had already written the names on a piece of paper of three polygamist men who lived in the area that he considered “worthy to participate in our plan.” Mary Ann was allowed to choose one of them, she chose Fredrick Walter Cox, while her husband embraced and consoled her. Although not happy about his sacrifice, Edmund was pleased with the choice. When Brigham Young approached Cox “. . . with the idea of raising a family for another man. He flatly refused.” However, he too had a vision where the Lord told him it was “divinely inspired.” Cox accepted the offer and reported to President Young for duty. A product of this arrangement, “Their son Charles Edmund Richardson later wrote in his diary, 'It took three visions and a religion to reconcile others to my coming.'”

As president of the Church and Governor of the territory of Utah, Brigham Young had authority to grant divorces and join couples in civil and eternal unions of matrimony. He had

already performed an eternal marriage for Mary Ann and Edmund Richardson. On this occasion he granted a civil divorce to the Richardson's. On January 9, 1858, Young performed a civil marriage between Mary Ann Richardson and Fredrick Walter Cox. Now their plan for the Richardson's family to increase was legal in the eyes of the state and of God. It was agreed by all parties that the children born from this union were to be raised by Edmund Richardson. Furthermore, to protect Cox from polygamist government persecution, Mary Ann lived in the Richardson home and kept the Richardson last name. Edmund moved away for a few years but sent money to Mary Ann to support his family.

The situation only became bearable when they thought about the purpose of their plan, eternal increase and because it was sanctioned by the Lord. Mary Ann stayed busy with weaving, taking care of two children and giving birth to two more sons among other things. Edmund worked as a minor, a carpenter and a miller in Tooele County, Utah over two hundred miles away from where his family resided. To avoid the rough life of a miner, Edmund "spent his time and effort in prayer and study, and carpentering, or just whittling for relaxation." Also, He bought his own mining claim and worked it as time permitted.

There was not much communication, but Mary Ann did notify Edmund, "Our son, born October 13, 1858, will be named Charles Edmund Richardson." Upon hearing this, Edmund purchased a four-acre plot of land with an orchard, garden spot, and a home in Springville, Utah in anticipation of reuniting with his family. He kept it a secret as a surprise for Mary Ann. October 17, 1859 was another momentous occasion when Edmund and Mary Ann received their endowments and repeated their eternal marriage sealing in the endowment house in Salt Lake City with President Young's approval. Next, on January 26, 1861, Mary Ann gave birth to another son, Sullivan Calvin (Sullie). Soon after Sullie's birth, Mary Ann spent practically every

penny she had to purchase a captive Indian baby stolen by an enemy tribe to save him from the cruelties of its leader, Chief Walker. Other members of the Manti community also purchased babies to keep them from the torture that awaited them from Walker.

Finally, Edmund returned to Manti to reclaim his family. “The reunion with her [Mary Ann], Emma Lynette and George, and the three new sons she presented him, were worth the sacrifices they had made” The Indian baby that became an adopted Richardson child became sick a short time later and died. When Edmund and Mary Ann were remarried, he told her about the new land purchase in Springville and expressed that his gift did not compare with the gift she gave him of eternal increase. Before leaving for their new home, Fredrick Cox threw a party in honor of the Richardson family.¹⁷⁹ Descendants of Edmund and Mary Ann Richardson consider this event pivotal to the dedication and perseverance of their ancestors for the gospel’s sake. To them it is a story of faith, sacrifice and love that blessed their family for generations to come. Charles Edmund¹⁸⁰ explained that since his parents knew nothing of the gospel in regard to the value and necessity of bearing and rearing children they had not intended to have more than the two they brought across the plains. He said, “My brother, Sullie, and I owe our very existence on this earth to the teachings of the gospel after our parents became acquainted with it.”¹⁸¹ This type of marital relationship was the exception to the rule. The following story illustrates the more common polygamous relationship in nineteenth century Utah.

Polygamy in Practice

Oneita Lewis VanNoy was born on September 18, 1900 into a polygamous family in Lewiston, Utah. Her father, William Hendricks Lewis, was married to three women, each of

¹⁷⁹ Richardson, *Man of Destiny*, 28-34.

¹⁸⁰ See footnote 187.

¹⁸¹ Richardson, 26.

them had their own home with separate material possessions. The first wife, Matilda, was called aunt Mat by William's children from the other two wives. Aunt Mat had twelve biological children and she was considered the head wife. She had the largest home probably because Aunt Mat had the most children. The second wife, Eda or Aunt Edie, raised six biological children, while the third wife and Oneita's mother, Julia, also had six biological children. Although her father passed away on September 5, 1905 when she was only five years of age, Oneita had fond memories of her childhood.¹⁸²

For instance, Oneita did not remember feeling any different from the monogamous households of her peers in the vicinity of where she lived. There were only two other polygamous families in Lewiston. In addition, she felt that all three households in her family were treated fairly and equitably. "The boys," as she called them, were probably two older brothers from one of the other two wives, perhaps Aunt Mat, since her children presumably were older. These boys were responsible for keeping the other children "in line." Apparently, the mothers and father made the rules for the children to obey and the older siblings enforced them. Indeed, they were father figures to the younger children. They kept the Lewis farm functioning properly by providing money from outside employment and perhaps assigning chores for the other siblings. If the younger siblings feared getting into trouble, they withheld information from them.

Although she does not have many memories of her father, she and her siblings adored their mother. Mother Julia was an extrovert, very friendly and seemed to get along with everyone. Julia never talked about polygamy to her children. However, Oneita recollects that church leaders asked her father, William, to practice plural marriage because he could afford it.

¹⁸² Oneita Lewis, Interviewed by Douglas Pike, July 12, 1981, Lewiston, UT.

Based upon Mormon teachings, William Lewis must have been a “faithful” member of the Mormon community to be asked to be a polygamist from church leadership. In addition, Oneita understood that leaders of the church called any Mormon man to polygamy who had money enough to take care of a large family. Some men and women refused to obey the practice. Oneita did not know if her father got in trouble with the Federal Government for cohabitating with three wives, but she remembered other members having to answer for it. On the other hand, she does remember one sibling, Lorin, being born in star valley; presumably because Julia was in hiding to avoid prosecution for cohabiting with William Lewis. Oneita’s mother, Julia, lived twenty-four years after her husband passed away, but never remarried. When asked if her mother ever considered remarrying, Oneita replied, “Heavens no. She said she couldn’t get anybody that could compare in her husband so she wouldn’t be interested at all.”¹⁸³

General Polygamy

Heber C. Kimball married the most wives, forty-five; Brigham Young with twenty-seven; some say Joseph Smith married twenty-seven, but there is no authentic documentation to corroborate any children that came from any Joseph Smith marital relationships other than through Emma. John D. Lee had nineteen wives, while Orson Pratt had ten. Beyond these leaders, the number of wives drastically decreases for any other polygamist member of the church. Stephanie Smith Goodson stated, “In a study of 2,000 who practiced polygamy, Stanley Ivins found that 66 percent of the male membership had taken one additional wife, 21 percent had taken a third wife, 66 percent a fourth wife and 6 percent five or more wives.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Oneita Lewis, Interviewed by Douglas Pike.

¹⁸⁴ Claudia L. Bushman, ed., “Plural Wives,” by Stephanie Smith Goodson in *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1997), 93-94; Thomas W. Simpson, *American Universities*, 168 (n. 19).

Government Edict

Political pressure regarding polygamy continued until U.S. President James Buchanan overreacted to sensational stories from former Utah Government officials that Mormons were in open rebellion against the United States government. He sent an army to quell the alleged rebellion. The Mormons were not notified officially, but rumors trickled in from friends and missionaries regarding the army coming.¹⁸⁵ After the Civil War began, the U.S. Congress passed a series of anti-bigamy laws against Mormon Polygamy.

The time period was marked by official persecution when legislation was written by the U.S. congress to apply pressure on the Mormon hierarchy to discontinue polygamy or face legal action. The United States government increasingly became hostile toward the LDS Church over this issue. While the church defended their right to practice plural marriage under religious freedom, presidential campaigns during this period denounced the practice as inconsistent with the moral fabric of Christian society. One republican campaign included it with a growing public support to eradicate slavery referencing it as "the twin relics of barbarism— polygamy and slavery."¹⁸⁶ In addition, it may have been an important factor in ushering in the Utah War of 1857-58.

Utah Mormon polygamy was initially protected, since government statutes were not enforced in United States Territories. However, all that changed in 1862 when congress passed the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act prohibiting plural marriages in any of its territories.¹⁸⁷ Believing “Gods laws are greater than man’s laws” and that the constitution of the United States under the

¹⁸⁵ *JD*, 5:350, 353; *JD*, 5:322-23; *JD*, 6:18-27; *JD*, 10:109-10.

¹⁸⁶ Jessie L. Embry, “Polygamy,” Utah History Encyclopedia, 1994, accessed on December 25, 2017. https://www.uen.org/utah_history/encyclopedia/p/POLYGAMY.shtml.

¹⁸⁷ Embry, “Polygamy,” 1994.

First Amendment protected them, the LDS church ignored the new law. In addition, Abraham Lincoln made it clear he would not enforce this law, as long as the Mormons did not interfere with his agenda. As could be expected, the LDS church continued the practice of plural marriage with impunity. Mormons were forgotten for a few years when America was embroiled in the U.S. Civil War, and religious life went on unmolested.¹⁸⁸

Later, polygamy became an obstacle for Utah becoming a State. After the Civil War, Utah non-Mormon immigrants wanted political power, but were prevented due to the consolidation of the members to one political system. Non-Mormons formed their own party and pushed for political changes that sought to weaken Mormon political power in Utah. In September 1871, Young was indicted for adultery due to his plural marriages. In 1879, in *Reynolds V. United States*, the Supreme Court of the United States upheld the Morrill Act, stating: "Laws are made for the government of actions, and while they cannot interfere with mere religious belief and opinion, they may with practices."¹⁸⁹

Sister Wives Defended Polygamy

Sister Wives is a misnomer developed by outsiders of the church and is attached to the idea that Mormon women were abused and were unwilling participants in plural marriage. On the contrary, when federal injunctions targeted the now public polygamy, LDS women reacted by writing letters and sending memorials to congress. The passing of the 1870 anti-polygamy Cullom Bill was resented by women throughout the church, causing political fallout against this action. Sarah Kimball remarked that LDS women would be "unworthy of the names we bear and

¹⁸⁸ Andrew Jenson, "Synopsis of Church Troubles, Events, and Polygamy", Discourse, General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1920, 76-78; *JD*, 9:234-35; *JD*, 19:95; *JD*, 11:179-80.

¹⁸⁹ Embry, "Polygamy", 1994.

of the blood in our veins, should we longer remain silent.”¹⁹⁰ A committee was appointed to draft a resolution to be sent to congress voicing Mormon women’s concern over the attack on polygamy. Eliza R. Snow said it was, “high time . . . [to] . . . rise up in the dignity of our calling and speak for ourselves. The world does not know us . . . and truth and justice to our brethren and to ourselves demands us to speak. . . . We are not inferior to the Ladies of the World, and we do not want to appear so.”¹⁹¹

Annie Clark Tanner remembers feeling sorry for people who believed the misinformation about Utah women and polygamy. She attended the mass meeting in Salt Lake City of Mormon women from all areas of Utah. She said it was a “protest against the indignities, persecutions, and sufferings inflicted by the officers of the law in the territory.”¹⁹² The anti-polygamy legislation increased in the 1880s resulting in the arrest and imprisonment of men engaged in the practice of plural marriage. Many men and women were forced into hiding to avoid prosecution, and some women were arrested for contempt of court because they would not divulge the name of their husband. Mormon women did not take this abuse sitting down but visited congress and the U. S. President in Washington D.C. in an attempt to alleviate the pressure against the church. None of their efforts proved successful,¹⁹³ but it showed a determination of Mormon women who defended the practice of plural marriage.

Furthermore, in 1886 the Utah anti-polygamy campaign established a place for polygamist women to escape from their lifestyle. In 1889, anti-polygamist activist, Angie

¹⁹⁰ Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of the Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 110.

¹⁹¹ Derr, 110.

¹⁹² Annie Clark Tanner, *A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography by Annie Clark Tanner* (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund and University of Utah Library, 1991), 77.

¹⁹³ Derr, *Women of Covenant*, 134.

Newman, with support from other activists acquired a “safe house” in Salt Lake City for those women who were victims of polygamy. There were never more than twenty refugees in any year and it finally closed in 1893 due to lack of business. The anti-polygamy legislation only recommitted the members of the church, both male and female, to faithfulness to its unique practice in American history. Both LDS men and women fought to keep the right to practice their doctrine of plurality of wives, until it became futile. The methodology and tactics developed by Joseph Smith and his successors in the religious education on Marriage of their followers was apparently successful; many Mormon men and women embraced plural marriage.

John Taylor in Hiding: Underground Polygamy

By the 1880's, thousands of polygamous Mormons were imprisoned, and others forced to go into hiding to avoid prosecution. Due to polygamy, Utah and Idaho governments banned Mormons from voting privileges, holding public office or owning property. Loyalty oaths to the laws of the nation were demanded under threat of job loss and denial of statehood until polygamy was ended. Many Mormons fled to Mexico or Canada to continue their polygamous lifestyles. In February 1882, Mormon leader and Apostle George Q. Cannon was denied a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives due to his involvement in polygamy.

Shortly thereafter, the Edmunds Act was passed by Congress, amending the Morrill Act making polygamy a felony punishable by a five hundred dollar fine and five years in prison. "Unlawful cohabitation" was deemed illegal as well, meaning that a marriage ceremony was not necessary to be found guilty of this statute. It only needed to be proved that a couple lived together. “Unlawful cohabitation” was made a misdemeanor punishable by a three hundred dollar fine and six months in jail. It also prevented polygamists from voting or holding political office. Moreover, polygamists could be punished without due process. Even an admission in the

mere belief in plural marriage prevented someone from their right as a United States citizen. Also, those who engaged in polygamist marriages before the 1862 Morrill Act was implemented were not exempt from this statute. If caught cohabiting, they would be subject to the penalties of the 1882 Edmunds Act.¹⁹⁴ Church leaders prayerfully sought guidance from the Lord and struggled to understand what they should do. Both Presidents John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff felt the Lord directing them to stay the course and not renounce plural marriage prior to 1890.¹⁹⁵

Political pressure intensified when congress passed the 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Act allowing for the disenfranchisement of the LDS Church and the seizure of church property if it refused to comply with monogamous marriage. Furthermore, it increased the punishments of the Edmunds Act. In that same year, the U.S. Attorney General filed suit to seize all church assets. The church was losing control of virtually all their rights as citizens and Mormon polygamist leaders were being pursued as fugitives. Eventually, the Mormon hierarchy was

¹⁹⁴ Embry, "Polygamy", 1994.

¹⁹⁵ Thomas G. Alexander, "The Odyssey of a Latter-day Prophet: Wilford Woodruff and the Manifesto of 1890," Chap. 9 in *Banner of the Gospel: Wilford Woodruff*, Edited by Alexander L. Baugh and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2010), accessed on December 25, 2017. rsc.byu.edu/archived/banner-gospel-wilford-woodruff/9-odyssey-latter-day-prophet-wilford-woodruff-and-manifesto. President John Taylor's son, Apostle John W. Taylor, later reported that he found among his father's papers, after his death, "a revelation given him [President Taylor] of the Lord." "President Taylor desired to have it [plural marriage] suspended, but the Lord would not permit it to be done." D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 28-30, n89-n90. Years later, Taylor's son, John W., presented a copy of this revelation to the Twelve at his excommunication trial for his defense in continuing to perform plural marriages. Francis M. Lyman, President of the Twelve, noted in his diary entry for that day that this "purported revelation" was "never submitted to the Councils of the Priesthood nor the church" and was therefore not binding on the Church. Quinn, 28-30. If authentic, the revelation had been superseded by the Manifesto, which was given to the post-John Taylor administration by revelation to President Wilford Woodruff and was accepted by the Church at general conference. Wilford Woodruff, "Official Declaration-1". www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/od/1.

forced to live and run the church “underground” for fear of arrest. The passage of the Edmunds–Tucker Act made it difficult if not impossible to operate the church effectively. On July 25, 1887, President Taylor passed away while in hiding living in Kaysville, Utah. Federal Law enforcement officials were actively pursuing Mormon polygamist men for arrest. New Church leader Wilford Woodruff visited Mormon settlements and spoke with local priesthood leaders seeking advice from the members.¹⁹⁶

It is interesting to note that most members never entered plural marriage. Therefore, most members lived in monogamist households and the number of families involved in polygamy varied by community. For instance, thirty percent of families lived in plural homes in St. George in 1870, while forty percent practiced it in 1880. In South Weber, only five “percent practiced the principle in 1880.” Contrary to non-Mormon popular opinion, “most polygamous Mormon husbands married only two wives.” Plural wives most often resided in “separate homes and had direct responsibility for their children.” If the wives lived near one another, the husband tended to visit each wife daily or if impractical at least weekly. Polygamist families perhaps had higher levels of tension within a family, but polygamy certainly was not the only aspect of trouble in Mormon marriages. Polygamist and monogamist families tended to have similar marital troubles. As with monogamist families, there were no established rules for polygamists to relate to one another. It depended on the personalities involved in each family. The difference may have been that in plural marriage, one must adjust to more personalities; each family adapted to their particular circumstances.”¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Jenson, General Conference, April 1920, 76-78; Alexander, “The Odyssey of a Latter-day Prophet”; Embry, “Polygamy”, 1994.

¹⁹⁷ Embry, “Polygamy”, 1994; Thomas W. Simpson, *American Universities*, 171, n54.

Wilford Woodruff: Abandoning Polygamy

The end of plural marriage required a tremendous amount of faith by both leaders and lay members. The evidence shows it was just as difficult to begin living polygamy in Mormon culture as it was to terminate its practice. Like the beginning of Mormon polygamy (and other religious practices), “the end of the practice was a process rather than a single event.”

Revelation came “line upon line, precept upon precept.”¹⁹⁸ After all appeals to the U. S. Supreme Court failed, President Woodruff looked to God for relief from persecution.¹⁹⁹ On September 3, 1890, Woodruff traveled to San Francisco and met with businessmen and politicians. Upon returning to Salt Lake City, Woodruff determined to seek divine revelation on the polygamy question that was tearing the church apart. President Woodruff later explained to church members that the choice was between continuing to practice plural marriage and thereby losing control of the temples, which provided for the essential saving ordinances for all of mankind and ceasing plural marriage, which would end governmental persecution allowing for human rights to be restored to its membership as well as allowing the Mormon hierarchy to run the church unmolested from government edict.

Furthermore, Woodruff insisted that he acted as the Lord directed him to: “I should have let all the temples go out of our hands; I should have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of heaven commanded me to do what I do; and when the hour came that I was commanded to do that, it was all clear to me.” In 1890, Wilford Woodruff, sought and received a revelatory answer from God ending polygamy in Utah Territory. Woodruff issued a Manifesto that officially terminated the practice of polygamy. Although this

¹⁹⁸ *D&C*, 98:12.

¹⁹⁹ *JD*, 23:111-12; Jenson, General Conference, April 1920, 76-78.

Manifesto did not dissolve existing plural marriages, relations with the United States government improved after 1890.²⁰⁰ The Manifesto prompted uncertainty about the future of some relationships. For instance, Eugenia Washburn Larsen, fearing the worst, reported feeling “dense darkness” when she imagined herself and other wives and children being “turned adrift” by husbands.²⁰¹ Other plural wives, however, reacted to the Manifesto with “great relief.”²⁰²

Little did the U.S. government know, principles in the Manifesto were already implemented privately long before it publicly disavowed plural marriage in U.S. controlled America. In the 1888 constitutional hearings for statehood, under the direction of leading apostle Joseph F. Smith, Mormon leaders Franklin Richards, Charles Penrose and others publicly stated the church’s intentions of making plural marriage optional rather than mandatory for members to be saved. It is easy to interpret the wording of the Manifesto as “prohibiting new plural marriages in the United States” exclusively. Nothing in the Manifesto prohibited members from engaging in polygamy outside the United States prevue. Therefore, polygamy continued in Mexico and Canada for a few years post-manifesto. Moreover, church leadership reproved anybody who publicly promoted polygamy. Even as early as 1882, the Mormon hierarchy

²⁰⁰ Woodruff, *Official Declaration 1*. Wilford Woodruff’s Official Declaration terminated the LDS practice of plural marriage. Excerpts from *Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto*: a) *Sixty-first Semiannual General Conference of the Church, Monday, October 6, 1890, Salt Lake City, Utah. Reported in Deseret Evening News, October 11, 1890, p. 2.* b) *Cache Stake Conference, Logan, Utah, Sunday, November 1, 1891. Reported in Deseret Weekly, November 14, 1891.* c) *From a discourse at the sixth session of the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple, April 1893. Typescript of Dedicatory Services, Archives, Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City, Utah, accessed September 20, 2017. www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/od/1.*

²⁰¹ Lorena Larsen, *Autobiography of Lorena Eugenia Washburn Larsen* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1962), 105-6.

²⁰² Tanner, *A Mormon Mother*, 130; Lisa Olsen Tait, “The 1890s Mormon Culture of Letters and the Post-Manifesto Marriage Crisis: A New Approach to Home Literature”, *BYU Studies* 52, no. 1 (2013): 98-124.

encouraged its polygamist husbands to “live under the same roof with only one wife.” Wilford Woodruff set the example by practicing “temporal monogamy by living only with Emma [Woodruff].” His first wife, Pheobe Woodruff passed away by this time. However, this council by no means meant that husbands could abandon their other plural wives. Mormon spousal or child abandonment has never been acceptable under any circumstances.²⁰³

Chapter Three: Post Manifesto, 1890-1904 **New Plural Marriages**

Mormon polygamy officially ended to satisfy the U.S. government, but what was the membership taught on how to live their lives in light of the recent marriage changes? Mormons seemed to need a transition period. Therefore, much like the revelation on the Word of Wisdom (no smoking or drinking alcohol) when initially decreed the church allowed for a gradual dissolution of polygamy. The Word of Wisdom was not initially given by way of command. After a period, the word of wisdom was elevated to a commandment. Apparently, polygamy ended in similar fashion, the church may have ended polygamy officially, but they continued to have covert plural marriages sanctioned by church authorities for years after the manifesto.²⁰⁴

Although the Manifesto was publicly announced and documented in writing, apparently, the ban was not strictly enforced. One wonders how much discussion took place among the Mormon hierarchy since some leaders assumed the Manifesto merely “suspended” plural marriage for a time.²⁰⁵ When a person or entire community adheres to a certain way of life for a

²⁰³ Alexander, “The Odyssey of a Latter-day Prophet”; Kenneth L. Cannon II, “Beyond the Manifesto: Polygamous Cohabitation Among LDS General Authorities after 1890,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 1, Winter 1978:27.

²⁰⁴ James R. Clark, ed. “Amnesty Petition,” Nov. 1, 1891, in *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 3:229-31; D. Michael Quinn, “LDS Church Authority”, 59-70.

²⁰⁵ George F. Gibbs telegram to Senator Reed Smoot April 1, 1911, p.2, Bx 11, Fd 16, The Scott G. Kenney Collection: A Register by Stan Larson,

period of time, it is understandable that stopping “cold turkey” may be harder than one should expect. Notwithstanding a government edict demanding that all polygamy stop at once, the reality is much more pragmatic and complicated. For instance, the government insisted polygamy immediately stop, but the Manifesto was silent on how to deal with polygamist’s families that already existed. What was to become of the extended family tie’s that were the outcome of polygamy?

Therefore, lack of direction equals a myriad of ways of doing away with plural marriage. Some polygamists continued to add to their families with more wives and children. Others continued cohabitating with current polygamist relationships but did not increase the number of wives. Still others felt free to separate or divorce from every wife except one but provide financial support to the rest to conform with the “law of the land.” However, scripture dictated that it was wrong to abandon one’s family, monogamist or polygamist. George Q. Cannon, a counselor to Wilford Woodruff during the time of the ban explained that God does not hold people accountable when prevented from doing their religious duty. He quoted a scripture to prove his case, “Behold, it behooveth me to require that [they] work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their

Manuscript Division. Special Collections, University of Utah Marriot Library (Salt Lake City: 1996). Gibbs was The First Presidency Secretary. He instructed Smoot, if asked by the U.S. president regarding post-manifesto polygamy, to tell him George Q. Cannon authorized polygamy after the manifesto. Post Manifesto marriages authorized by a member of the First Presidency are considered valid by the Church. The Church should not be expected to humiliate marriage recipients done in this way, since it was not their fault. Gibbs to Smoot, in Kenney’s collection, Bx 11, Fd 16, University of Utah Special Collections.

offerings.”²⁰⁶

Furthermore, in private, the Mormon leadership condemned those husbands who used the Manifesto as an excuse to abandon their polygamist families. Wilford Woodruff exclaimed, “I did not, could not and would not promise that you would desert your wives and children . . . This you cannot do in honor.”²⁰⁷ Devout Mormon men refused to break their temple covenants, so they continued to cohabitate with their wives fathering children with them into the twentieth century, whether or not it pleased secular government. Again, God’s law was superior to manmade law. Worthy, valiant men of God would never abandon family.²⁰⁸

Couples who continued to cohabitate exposed themselves to possible prosecution, since the government expected all polygamists to abandon all wives and children except one wife and the children from that one wife. However, once the manifesto was issued, the government was no longer aggressively seeking to arrest violators. The result of a decrease in attacking the church over this issue was that the relationship between church and state improved. The Church now had a new relationship with the nation. The wives of polygamists no longer hid from authorities and assumed their married names. Husbands spent more time with all of their family without fear of being arrested. Benjamin Harrison was a godsend upon his election to the U.S. Presidency. His administration only lasted a month. Harrison died in office after catching pneumonia

²⁰⁶ Woodruff, “Official Declaration 1”; *D&C*, 132; *D&C*, 124:49; Jessie L. Embry, “Polygamy,” *Utah History Encyclopedia*, 1994; Quinn, “LDS Church Authority”, 48.

²⁰⁷ Kenneth L. Cannon, “Beyond the Manifesto,” 27; Quinn, “LDS Church Authority”, 60.

²⁰⁸ Cannon, “Beyond the Manifesto,” 27; Quinn, 56-59.

during his inauguration. In 1893, he accomplished one thing, Harrison granted amnesty to all polygamists. In 1896, Utah became a state and also made plural marriage illegal under the state constitution.²⁰⁹

Although Woodruff banned polygamy in the U.S. to align itself with the law, he had no intention of discontinuing it in other nations such as Mexico or Canada. Mormon colonies had been opened since before the Manifesto to allow polygamists to roam free in peace without government interference. To avoid being targets, Mormon leaders now performed plural marriages in Mexico and Canada in private after 1890.²¹⁰ For the most part, new plural marriages were not encouraged and rarely approved after 1890. Most families involved in new plural marriages agreed to live in Canada or Mexico because these governments were not seeking prosecution. There were a few new plural marriages performed within U.S. borders after 1890, but before 1904. It is not clear if the participants had permission from the Mormon hierarchy.²¹¹

It may be an impossibility to determine with accuracy the exact number of plural marriages performed by church authorities in the post Manifesto era. The marriage/sealing records kept by the church do not ordinarily differentiate between polygamous and

²⁰⁹ President Harrison's amnesty proclamation pardoned all those who might have been found in violation of the Edmonds and Edmunds-Tucker Acts who had abstained from unlawful cohabitation since November 1, 1890. Bagley, *Doing the Works of Abraham*, 357-64.

²¹⁰ B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 173-82. Polygamy was illegal in Mexico and, after 1890, in Canada as well, but the governments of those countries did not actively prosecute Mormon polygamists. In the case of Mexico, Mormon authorities worked out a verbal agreement with Mexican officials allowing them to practice plural marriage in their colonies. Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 172-82.

²¹¹ Matthias F. Cowley's daughter, Elna Cowley Austin, Interviewed by Leonard R. Grover on January 26, 1980, CRC-K108. Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, L. Tom Perry Special Collections. Brigham Young University, LDS Polygamy Oral History Project, 10-13.

monogamous marriages. One way might be to identify one man being sealed to one wife. Next, track him and see if his name came up again. This would be exhausting for any researcher, let alone one under dissertation time restraints. However, research has been done by looking at a chronological ledger of marriages and sealings kept by the Church. At a time when temples were few and not practical for traveling due to the distance, LDS couples were permitted to be sealed at home outside of temples. One researcher discovered documentation from Mormon marriage scribes of three hundred and fifteen marriages performed between 1890 and 1903 outside of temples.²¹² Moreover, of those over three hundred marriages, twenty-five were polygamous, while two hundred and ninety were monogamous marriages. Of those twenty-five plural marriages, only two were performed in Utah, three in Arizona, one in Colorado and one took place while sailing on a boat in the Pacific Ocean. The majority, eighteen marriages or 7.9 percent of marriages, were performed in Mexico. Although, plural marriage was not abruptly terminated since the Manifesto, it was obviously in decline compared to previous years.²¹³

Final approval for plural marriages had to be ratified by the President of the Church

²¹² Thomas G. Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, a Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 264-74. Marriages and Sealings Performed Outside the Temple, 1853-1857, 1873-1903. The ledger does not record plural and monogamous marriages known to have been performed by Anthony W. Ivins, Matthias F. Cowley, and Abraham O. Woodruff during the 1890s and early 1900s. In all, 8 of 19 members of the Quorum of the Twelve who served between 1890 and 1904 married new plural wives during those years, and these marriages are not represented on the ledger. These members include Brigham Young Jr., George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, Abraham H. Cannon, Marriner W. Merrill, Matthias F. Cowley, Abraham Owen Woodruff, and Rudger Clawson. It is alleged that President Wilford Woodruff married an additional plural wife in 1897, but the historical record makes this unclear. Kenneth L. Cannon, "Beyond the Manifesto", 30-32.

²¹³ Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth*, 264-74. Logan Temple Sealings, 1884-1903. Plural marriages performed within temples drastically diminished in number even before the Manifesto. In the Logan Temple, for example, plural marriage sealings peaked at 188 in the year 1885. The number diminished to 51

or one that he delegated to give permission; presumably one of the twelve apostles or at least a member of the First Presidency. There is insufficient evidence to determine if the President was always aware of each new plural marriage. For instance, President Wilford Woodruff usually had George Q. Cannon, his first counselor, deal with new plural marriages, especially after the 1890 Manifesto.²¹⁴ This gave Woodruff the ability to deny charges of direct involvement in continuing polygamy. At least some Apostles who once had authority to perform polygamous marriages acted on their own accord, without seeking permission from the President or one of his counselors. In 1900, when Heber J. Grant was an apostle visiting members, he received ten requests in one day for plural marriages in Mexico. Grant refused to violate the Manifesto by rejecting all ten.²¹⁵ However, even Wilford Woodruff

in the year 1888 and then 4 in the year 1889. Between 1890 and 1903, when the record of plural marriage sealings ends, no plural marriages are recorded as having taken place within the temple, and 6 plural marriages are recorded as having taken place in Logan or its vicinity. Cannon, "Beyond the Manifesto", 30-32.

²¹⁴ Francis M. Lyman journal, April 18, 1901; Joseph F. Smith to Reed Smoot, April 1, 1911, Joseph F. Smith Papers; B. H. Roberts to Heber J. Grant, July 9, 1929, B. H. Roberts Collection; Joseph T. Bentley, *Life and Letters of Joseph Charles Bentley: A Biography* (Provo, UT: printed by author, 1977), 77-81. President Joseph F. Smith later affirmed that he, President Woodruff, and President Snow, as Presidents of the Church, "have not given authority to anyone to perform or enter into plural marriages since the Manifesto." Victor W. Jorgensen and B. Carmon Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair and the Watershed of Mormon History", *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 48 (Winter 1980): 23. Joseph F. Smith told Reed Smoot in 1911 that if the former U.S. President [Theodore Roosevelt] asks about post-manifesto polygamy to "tell him the truth", it was George Q. Cannon's idea to continue polygamy outside U.S. Territory. Cannon was a member of First Presidency during the post-manifesto era. He gave the Church President "plausible deniability" regarding continued practice of polygamy. Gibbs to Smoot, in Kenney's collection, Bx 11, Fd 16, University of Utah Special Collections; Jorgensen and Hardy, "The Taylor-Cowley Affair", 36.

²¹⁵ Jorgensen and Hardy, 36; Heber J. Grant, "Diary."

was not so restrictive, and he was much more aware of post polygamy than many realize.

Wilford Woodruff went from monogamy to polygamy when he was almost forty years of age. He eventually married ten plural wives once the prophet Joseph Smith introduced the practice to him. Several of them eventually divorced him. Woodruff married wives in violation of the 1862 polygamy law but did not marry any wives after the Edmunds Act of 1882, until after the manifesto was given.²¹⁶ When the Manifesto was given on September 24, 1890, several members had already been promised that they could have their plural marriages sealed, so they petitioned Woodruff to provide exceptions for them. For example, Erastus Beck married his plural wife in Mexico after obtaining a recommend from his local leader immediately after the Manifesto's publication. In addition, Woodruff explained the reasons for issuing the Manifesto and then counseled Byron H. Allred that it was necessary for him to marry his to be plural wife in Mexico to avoid prosecution from U.S. officials. Apparently, Alexander F. Macdonald had church authority to seal post-plural marriages in Mexico because he performed the ceremony after the Manifesto was publicized.²¹⁷

Another post-Manifesto marriage occurred when Anson B. Call visited Woodruff's home while the prophet was gardening. Call was counseled to sell his property and move to Mexico before entering plural marriage. He arrived in Colonia Juarez, Mexico on December 11, 1890 and was married to a plural wife by Alexander F. Macdonald. Apparently, Macdonald was

²¹⁶ Wilford Woodruff, "Wilford Woodruff Diary," 2 Aug., 29 Aug. 1846, 28 March 1852, 10 March 1877; transcriptions of shorthand entries for 10 March 1877, 1 April 1878, 25 Nov. 1878 in Wilford Woodruff's Journal: 1833-1898 Typescript, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Murray, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-84), 7:338, 407, 439; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 59.

²¹⁷ Elizabeth Acord Beck, Interview in "Kimball Young Papers," Box 1, Fd. 2, 14 Feb. 1935, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, BYU library. Elizabeth Beck was the second wife of Erastus Beck married Oct. 1890 in Dublan, Mexico; Byron H. Allred, "Diary of Byron H. Allred," (Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT), 131; D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 59-60.

authorized by Woodruff to continue plural marriage since Macdonald expected Anson Call's arrival.²¹⁸ This is a clear indication that although Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto to satisfy the American U.S. government to end plural marriage, he really did not intend to end the practice. He simply delegated plural marriage authority to men who lived outside United States control. Unfortunately, not everyone involved in the practice kept the secret confidential. Call's marriage in Mexico was the last plural marriage "performed in 1890 after the issuance of the Manifesto." President Woodruff stopped allowing plural marriage for a time not to follow the "law of the land" but because one "young man . . . came back and allowed the knowledge of it to go out, and thus put the Church in danger."²¹⁹

The "young man" turned out to be Christian F. Olsen who was the first to enter polygamy after the Manifesto. Instead of being incognito, Olsen married his second wife in Mexico on October 17, 1890 and promptly brought her "back to live with him and his first wife in Hyrum, Utah."²²⁰ Wilford Woodruff did not know about Olsen's indiscretion until after he had authorized six more recommends for plural marriage. Otherwise, it is likely he would have stopped post-Manifesto plural marriage before it began, at least until he felt comfortable the government was not onto him. Based on the following statement he made to the First Presidency

²¹⁸ Anson Bowen Call, "Life Story of Anson Bowen Call," MS 7767, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2-3. Anson Call's daughter, Mildred Call Hurst, said, "President Woodruff gave Papa a letter of recommendation that he could marry this girl." Mildred Call Hurst, interviewed by Jessie L. Embry on July 12, 1976 (CRC-K108), Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, in LDS Polygamy Oral History Project, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 12-13; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 60, n199.

²¹⁹ Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 60.

²²⁰ Heber Bennion to Heber J. Grant, 9 July 1929, CR 1/44. This letter said that George Q. Cannon told him "that if I had presented my case promptly after the Manifesto I might have got through but some of those let through had acted so unwisely—registering as man and wife in Salt Lake after going to Mexico to be married—that President Woodruff stopped the whole business." Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 60, n201.

and Twelve on April 2, 1891, "The principle of plural marriage will yet be restored to this Church, but how or when I cannot say,"²²¹ Wilford Woodruff had every intention for the church to one day bring polygamy back—if not in his day then in another era regardless of national laws to the contrary.

What complicated matters was that after making emphatic “public pronouncements” that polygamous cohabitation was a violation of the Manifesto and members caught living with plural wives would be subject to disciplinary action, he would privately contradict the statement. For instance, on November 12, 1891, President Woodruff reasoned with the First Presidency and Twelve that he had no choice but to give answers publicly to satisfy the enemies of the church in order to protect God’s people and his church. Scripture was clear whether one is married to multiple marriage partners or one spouse, “any man who deserts and neglects his wives or children because of the Manifesto, should be handled on his fellowship.” Woodruff counseled church leadership “to agree that men must try to avoid being arrested or convicted for unlawful cohabitation and yet they must not break their covenants with their wives.”²²² Although the Federal government wanted the church to expunge polygamy in all its forms from church history, the Mormon hierarchy had different intentions. They were not going to abandon their families, polygamous or not, and they would give up plurality when they felt God wanted it done.

²²¹ Abraham H. Cannon, “Diary of Abraham H. Cannon,” 2 April 1891, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT; Heber J. Grant, “Heber J. Grant Journal”, 2 April 1891, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT. "He [God] will yet open doors that the principle of plural marriage can and will be restored." Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 61.

²²² Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 12 Nov. 1891; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 61.

Soon after this meeting, Woodruff led Mormon “apostles in petitioning U.S. President Benjamin Harrison for amnesty for all Latter-day Saint polygamists because they had strictly honored the Manifesto of 1890.” Although President Woodruff involved himself early on in post-Manifesto plural marriages, after December 1890, he turned over authorization for new plural marriages to other apostles.²²³ The number of new plural marriages varied in numbers for a couple of years until the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met in the Salt Lake Temple April 5, 1894. On that day, Wilford Woodruff stated, “The day is near when there will be no difficulty in the way of good men securing noble wives.”²²⁴ Although he usually distanced himself from polygamy after the Manifesto, in June 1897, Woodruff authorized Anthony W. Ivins, Stake President in Mexico and future apostle, to perform plural marriages in Mexico. In addition, a few months later he authorized Apostle Anthon H. Lund to perform two plural marriages.²²⁵

To the end of his life, Woodruff continued to deny publicly that he authorized any post-Manifesto polygamy. For instance, when a protestant newspaper accused the church of continuing the practice of plural marriages, Woodruff countered by writing the newspaper editor, “no one has entered into plural marriage by my permission since the Manifesto was issued.”²²⁶ This was an obvious fabrication of the truth when just days after the denial Woodruff met with

²²³ James R. Clark, ed. In *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 3:229-31; Quinn, “LDS Church Authority”, 61.

²²⁴ Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 5 April 1894; Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 5 April 1894; Francis M. Lyman, “Francis M. Lyman Journal”, 5 April 1894, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT; Quinn, “LDS Church Authority,” 62.

²²⁵ Stanley S. Ivins, “Facts in Regard to the Post-Manifesto Practice of Polygamy Related by My Father A.W. Ivins [on 16 September 1934, and recorded 15 October 1934].” *Ivins Papers*, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah; Quinn, “LDS Church Authority,” 62-63.

²²⁶ Wilford Woodruff, *Diary*, 7 March 1898; text of revelation quoted here from his 1880-85 diary. Quinn, “LDS Church Authority,” 65.

the adult children of his youngest plural wife. Woodruff cited an 1880 revelation he received, "And I say again, wo unto that Nation or house or people who seek to hinder my People from obeying the Patriarchal Law of Abraham."²²⁷ Again, it does not appear that President Wilford Woodruff ever anticipated giving up Joseph Smith's 1843 revelation on marriage, regardless of pressure from the United States government to the contrary. Other post-Manifesto church presidents followed suit.

Lorenzo Snow: Eliza R. Snow's Brother

Wilford Woodruff's successor, Lorenzo Snow, was also an avid follower of Joseph Smith. He became a polygamist in Nauvoo Illinois where he married two wives at the same time. Snow married his tenth and final plural wife, Minnie Jensen, in 1871 with whom he cohabitated exclusively by the time the Edmunds Act of 1882 became law. Yet Snow too was prosecuted and sent to prison in 1886 for cohabitating with his plural wives' contrary to the evidence.²²⁸ Like Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow supported a public renunciation of polygamy within the boundaries of the United States. In April 1896, Snow expressed his belief to fellow church leaders that the Lord would provide the means for continued cohabitating and raising children with their plural wives.²²⁹ In September 1896, Snow listened to a defense of polygamy sermon delivered by John W. Taylor while visiting the Saints in Canada. Snow's last polygamous child was born in

²²⁷ Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 65.

²²⁸ *JD*, 26:365; Eliza R. Snow Smith, "Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow", (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1884), 488-94. Lorenzo Snow, "Diary of Lorenzo Snow 1835-45", Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, 51. Source listed only the nine wives traditionally identified with him, but a lesser-known plural wife, Hannah Maria Goddard, married him on 19 January 1845, left him later that year, and married another Latter-day Saint. Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 66, n222; Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 5 April 1894.

²²⁹ Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 20 Dec. 1888. 1 April 1896, Fd. 19, Box 4, Anthon H. Lund Papers; Heber J. Grant, *Journal*, 1 April 1896; Quinn, 67.

Cardston, Canada in November of that year. Mexico Stake President Anthony W. Ivins continued to receive authorization to perform plural marriages, this time President Snow. In October 1898, Ivins performed several polygamous marriages to residents of his stake, including 2012 presidential Republican candidate Mitt Romney's grandfather, Miles A. Romney.²³⁰

Furthermore, President Snow gave another Apostle, Matthew F. Cowley, permission to marry a polygamist, Joseph Morrell, in Idaho in October 1898. Snow told Cowley that "he would not interfere with Brother Woodruff's and Cannon's work."²³¹ President Snow refused authorization for new plural marriages when the public knew he had personal knowledge about the specific marriage. Stake President Ivins and Apostle Cowley already received authority from Wilford Woodruff to seal post-Manifesto plural marriages in Mexico and the United States respectively making it easy for his successors to deny any knowledge of the marriages. For example, when rumors and stories persisted of continued Mormon plural marriages, Snow publically stated, "I will say now before this people, that the principle of plural marriage is not practiced. I have never, in one single instance, allowed any person to have that ceremony performed, and there are no such marriages at the present time, nor has [sic] there been during the time of my presidency over this church."²³²

²³⁰ Charles O. Card, "Journal of Charles O. Card", 6 Sept., 5 Nov. 1896, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah; Francis M. Gibbons, *Lorenzo Snow: Spiritual Giant, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. 1982), 207-09; Ivins also performed a plural marriage on 14 July 1898 for his counselor Helaman Pratt, but Pratt's plural wife Bertha Wilcken (Stewart) was an instructor in the LDS College in Salt Lake City until June 1898, and her membership record did not arrive in Dublan Ward until 18 Sept. 1898. She undoubtedly came to Mexico with the traditional letter from the First Presidency for nonresident polygamous marriages. Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 67-68, n236; Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 171-72.

²³¹ Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 68; Thomas W. Simpson, *American Universities*, 60-61.

²³² Eugene Young, "Revival of the Mormon Problem," *North American Review* 168, no. 509, April 1899, 483-85; Franklin D. Richards, "Diary of Franklin D. Richards", 5 April 1899, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 69; Simpson, *American Universities*, 60-61.

Lorenzo Snow consistently denied requests for continued new plural marriages throughout his tenure as President of the Church. For instance in March 1901, Snow denied Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., a new plural wife; despite the denial, Young did marry her that year anyway. The fact that the son of the late Mormon leader, Brigham Young, and three other Apostles married plural wives during Snow's administration gives pause as to how much Snow was aware of his immediate subordinates' actions. At the very least, many in highest leadership positions viewed the Manifesto with utter contempt. One apostle, the son of the author of the Manifesto, Abraham Owen Woodruff, dated a future plural bride for months before meeting with Lorenzo Snow. He married her as his second wife in January 1901. Apostle Marriner W. Merrill married a plural wife in April 1901 and the ceremony was performed by another apostle, Matthias F. Cowley. Cowley and Anthony Ivins, continued to perform plural marriages throughout Snow's administration.²³³

In addition, John W. Taylor defended himself during his excommunication by claiming Lorenzo Snow authorized him to marry two plural wives in August 1901. According to D. Michael Quinn, a private conversation Heber J. Grant (future Church President) claimed to have had with Lorenzo Snow is "the clearest evidence that Lorenzo Snow gave permission individually to the apostles to marry plural wives in 1901." Grant related, "Before I went to Japan [in July 1901] my President intimated that I had better take the action needed to increase my family." Grant goes on to indicate President Snow gave him permission to take another wife in May 1901 with the blessing of his second wife, Augusta Winters, who accompanied Grant on

²³³ Brigham Young, Jr., "Diary of Brigham Young Jr", Manuscript Division, New York Public Library, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, BYU library, 13 March 1901, 36-37; Abraham Owen Woodruff, *Diary*, 2, 14, and 17 Jan. 1901, originals at BYU library; LuAnn Faylor Snyder, *Post-Manifesto Polygamy*, 12-13, 20-22; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 72-73.

his mission to Japan. Later, Grant felt Snow gave him a reprieve from seeking another plural wife, so he dropped the matter completely, leaving for Japan without marrying a fourth wife.²³⁴

Joseph F. Smith: Second Manifesto

Joseph F. Smith was the son of Hyrum Smith who was martyred with his brother, founder Joseph Smith. Joseph F. Smith was the husband of five plural wives. His first wife divorced him because she believed polygamy was "adulterous intercourse." Smith was a devout follower of plural marriage and defended it with tenacity when confronted with its detractors. He was capable of intense anger, particularly when he confronted opposition to the practice. Prior to the Manifesto, Smith made the comment that he did not think God would permit his servants to, "acknowledge to the world that the laws of the land were superior to the laws of God." He suggested to his fellow apostles that they should never submit to man-made laws over God's law of Celestial Marriage. However, once the final version of the Manifesto was drafted, Smith told Joseph H. Dean, "there is a tacit understanding between the church and the Mexican government, that we may practice plural marriage but must outwardly appear to have but one wife." Smith told Heber J. Grant he did not believe the 1890 Manifesto was a revelation intended to abolish plural marriage altogether. In his mind, it was an inspired document drafted for the purpose of satisfying the Lord's enemies.²³⁵

²³⁴ John Taylor's plural wife Jenetta M. Woolley Taylor said that he obtained permission for these 1901 marriages from the Church president but incorrectly identified the president as Joseph F. Smith rather than Lorenzo Snow. Nettie M. Taylor, Interview, *Samuel W. Taylor Papers*, July 1947, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT; Heber J. Grant to Joseph F. Smith, Grant Papers, 5 Jan. 1906; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 73, n257; Simpson, *American Universities*, 60-61; Snyder, *Post-manifesto Polygamy*, 12-13, 20-22.

²³⁵ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith: Sixth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), 379-80; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1905), 34-35, 59-60; Heber J. Grant, Journal, 20 Dec. 1888; Joseph H. Dean, "Diary of Joseph H. Dean", 24 Sept. 1890, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT; Snyder, 12-13; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 82-83.

Based on his attitude toward the circumstances of government intrusion into the sanctity of Mormon matrimony, it is not surprising that Joseph F. Smith initially preserved the principle of plural marriage through clandestine tactics. For instance, more than his predecessors, Smith publicly condemned new polygamist marriages while simultaneously privately authorizing polygamy for Church leaders to continue the practice. The tactic allowed continued church obedience to God's command to live the law of Celestial Marriage as well as placating government edicts that thwart the Will of God. Undoubtedly this policy created a double standard as well as confusion for not only the membership of the church, but outsiders as well. The fallout from the decision to continue polygamy haunted the church for years to come.²³⁶

Apostle Senator Reed Smoot Hearings:

At the behest of President Joseph F. Smith, monogamist Apostle Reed Smoot was elected to the U.S. Senate. The Salt Lake Ministerial Association responded by filing a complaint with the U.S. Senate questioning Smoot's ability to do an effective job in the senate while he is an official of a church that not only condones polygamy but encourages it as well. The complaint named three Mormon Apostles who they said, "entered new polygamous relations since the manifesto of Wilford Woodruff. . . . That other polygamous relationships have . . . been consummated within the church . . . [and] could easily be proven."²³⁷ The result was that the Senate allowed Smoot to take his Senate Seat but promised a hearing to determine the validity of the complaint for final approval.

²³⁶ Rudger Clawson, "Diary of Rudger Clawson", Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT, 15 Jan., 25 June 1902,; Anthon H. Lund, "Diary of Anthon H. Lund", Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT, 16 Jan. 1902; Mark Hanna to John Henry Smith, 18 Dec. 1902, University of Utah Archives, Salt Lake City, UT; Milton R. Merrill, "Reed Smoot, Apostle in Politics", Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1950; Quinn, "LDS Church Authorities", 96; Simpson, *American Universities*, 60-61.

²³⁷ Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 96.

One of the stipulations was that the President of the Church, Joseph F. Smith, was subpoenaed to testify in the hearing, March 2, 1904, along with two post-Manifesto polygamists. Smith surprised the Senate when he admitted to cohabitating with his plural wives in violation of terms of the Manifesto. In addition, he testified to fathering eleven children since the issuance of the Manifesto. Witnesses in the Smoot hearings were placed under oath the violation of which would subject them to a conviction charge “punishable with up to five years' imprisonment.” Refusing to answer questions would also bring charges of contempt of Congress. Also, Apostle Reed Smoot faced expulsion and the church was in jeopardy of losing its corporation status and rights as a private religious entity with many of its leaders and members imprisoned in Federal Penitentiaries if witnesses divulged too much about post-Manifesto unions. President Smith told one potential witness in the Smoot case, "We should consider the interests of the Church rather than our own."²³⁸

After returning to Salt Lake City, Smith discussed with the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles the need to assure the government and country of the church's determination to end polygamy. Shortly thereafter, he told local Mormon leaders to be "as wise as serpents but as harmless as doves." On April 6, 1904, Joseph F. Smith presented a “Second Manifesto” for a sustaining vote in general conference. There were certain modifications in the second Manifesto such as no mention of unlawful cohabitation. Furthermore, the Second Manifesto emphatically denied 1890 post-Manifesto new plural marriages and added the clause

²³⁸ Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 25 Feb. 1904; Andrew Jenson, “Diary of Andrew Jenson”, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT, 1-2 March 1904; Quinn, “LDS Church Authority”, 96-98.

that every member in violation of the original Manifesto would be subject to excommunication, the severest ecclesiastical punishment.²³⁹

The Senate committee requested Smith to get Apostles Merrill, Teasdale, Taylor, and Cowley to come to Washington D.C. to testify at the Smoot hearing. President Smith responded that Merrill and Teasdale were too ill to travel to Washington, and Apostles Taylor and Cowley refused to appear. Smith indicated he had no control over the leaders outside of their ecclesiastic duties. Truth be told, Smith was not very enthusiastic about getting his subordinates to appear before an enemy tribunal; the Apostles knew too much. It was rumored that Apostle Abraham Owen Woodruff was about to be summoned to testify before the committee, but Smith sent him on a mission to Germany. Before going, Woodruff went to Mexico to spend time with his post-manifesto plural wife who was about to give birth to their first child.²⁴⁰ Worried about her husband falling into a trap in Washington, one plural wife related how her husband, Apostle John W. Taylor, responded, "I will do what my Prophet orders me to do."²⁴¹ It appears if President Smith had insisted, Apostle Taylor would have appeared before the Senate Committee as would the other requested Apostles.

Once it became public that Taylor and Cowley refused to appear before the committee, Smith was encouraged by both friend and foe to remove the two Apostles from the Quorum of

²³⁹ Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 4-5 April 1904; Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 4:84-85; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 98-99; Simpson, *American Universities*, 60-61.

²⁴⁰ Carl A. Badger, "Diary of Carl A. Badger," 18 April 1904, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT. Most letters appear in Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 374-77; Joseph E. Robinson, "Diary of Joseph E. Robinson", 20 Feb., 5 and 11 April 1904, Bx 1, Fd 6, 1 item, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT; LuAnn Faylor Snyder, *Post-Manifesto Polygamy*, 34-36; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 100.

²⁴¹ Nellie Todd Taylor, Interview, *Samuel W. Taylor Papers*, 18 Jan. 1936, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT. Cowley was identified in this letter by his codename Westlake. Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 100-101, n365.

the Twelve and excommunicate them. Apparently, the illness excuse worked with the other two Apostles, Teasdale and Merrill, probably due to their advanced age. However, Taylor and Cowley were viewed with suspicion due to their perceived insubordination toward President Smith. In the eyes of the enemies of the church and some members, they both had to go, especially if it meant to protect the Church. In accordance with that, both Apostles resigned their positions in the Quorum of the Twelve in October 1905. The resignations were made secret to be used at the most optimal time in the best interest of the church. Smith did not want to sacrifice the two apostles for the sake of unconstitutional laws, but he did it for the future of the church. Undoubtedly the two Apostles mutually agreed with the decision. Smith compared the sacrifice to Abraham and Isaac, when God rescinded the command to kill Isaac, a ram was provided to take the place of Isaac. In this case, Taylor and Cowley sacrificed their Apostleship to save the church.²⁴²

Further evidence that Taylor and Cowley were sacrificial lambs in the process of ending polygamy is that succeeding First Presidencies have acknowledged the legitimacy of post-Manifesto plural marriages. For instance, Heber J. Grant wrote in 1934: "I have never felt to hold anything against any person who was married by Owen Woodruff or John W. Taylor prior to John W. having lost his standing in the Church." And regarding the former Mexico Stake President who advanced to the office of Apostle, Anthony Ivins, Grant reassured one member

²⁴² Carl A. Badger, *Diary*, 18 April 1904. Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, shows that this conversation occurred on 15 April 1904; Franklin S. Richards to Joseph F. Smith, *Smith Papers*, 28 April 1904; Anthon H. Lund, *Diary*, 16 May 1904; For published quotations from the resignations see Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 6:629-37, and Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 379-80; George F. Gibbs to Reed Smoot, *Smoot Papers*, 9 Dec. 1905, Bx 48, Fd 68 Notation of a copy sent on 26 Oct. 1904 to George Teasdale; Anthony W. Ivins to Heber J. Grant, *Grant Papers*, 29 Dec. 1905; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 101, 103.

who questioned the sealing of their parents by Ivins, "I have not the slightest doubt that President Ivins performed the sealing uniting your husband's father and mother in polygamy in Mexico before this pronouncement of President Joseph F. Smith." Further, in 1944 the First Presidency wrote to the family of Anthony W. Ivins that couples sealed between 1890 and 1904 by men in authority were valid plural marriages.²⁴³

In 1960, President David O. McKay responded to a woman who questioned the validity of her parent's plural marriage in 1902 that was performed by Matthew F. Cowley. He had been removed from the Council of the Twelve Apostles for post-1890 Manifesto marriages. The First Presidency said, "It is our understanding, and we have so answered others, that these marriages performed under the circumstances in this sister's letter to you were real sealings."²⁴⁴ President Spencer W. Kimball's comments about one of his aunts who was a plural wife married in the United States is very revealing regarding "post-Manifesto polygamous marriage[s]." Kimball²⁴⁵ referred to the year 1902 when she was married and said, "I don't know just when the Manifesto was made operative in all the world, including Canada and Mexico, but Aunt Fannie was married before the late President Joseph F. Smith 'locked the gate.'"²⁴⁶

²⁴³ Heber J. Grant to Katherine H. (Mrs. Rulon C.) Allred, First Presidency Letterbook, 15 Nov. 1935, 163; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 103-04. Rulon C. Allred accurately quoted that letter in Truth 8:199 and in Most Holy Principle 4:88, but in talks to his Fundamentalist followers from 1966 to 1972, Rulon C. Allred claimed that Heber J. Grant wrote a letter to Allred's wife in 1932 stating that Anthony W. Ivins performed the polygamous marriage in Mexico for his parents Byron Harvey Allred, Jr. and Mary Evelyn Clark on 15 July 1903 "with the perfect knowledge and consent of the First Presidency of the Church". Quinn, 103-04, n378; Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark, and David O. McKay to H. Grant Ivins, 21 March 1944; Snyder, *Post-Manifesto Polygamy*, 40-41.

²⁴⁴ Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 104.

²⁴⁵ Spencer W. Kimball was President of the church from 1973-1985, post-Manifesto marriages were acknowledged as legitimate until 1985. This belief probably continues to persist today.

²⁴⁶ Spencer W. Kimball, Interviewed by Gary L. Shumway, 1972, James H. Moyle Oral History Program, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, BYU Library, Provo, UT, 17-18; Snyder, *Post-Manifesto Polygamy*, 40-41; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority," 104.

Historian D. Michael Quinn suggested that church leaders “protect[ed] the Church” at the expense of “the descendants of authorized post-Manifesto polygamists” who suffered as the church entered the world of monogamy. It is true that modern day Mormons cite the 1890 Manifesto as the time when LDS polygamy ended for *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. However, based on the evidence presented here, Mormon hierarchy did not abolish polygamy at the time of the first Manifesto. Plural marriage continued until the second Manifesto was issued and a little beyond that event as well. Joseph F. Smith allowed “fewer than ten exceptions to what was now almost a universal ban on new polygamy.” As Spencer W. Kimball alluded to, the exact day when the ban on polygamy went into effect is unknown; however, that it happened early in Joseph F. Smith’s administration is well-documented.²⁴⁷

In short, because of ambiguity as to when plural marriage ended, it opened the door to other factions claiming authority to enter polygamy. Eventually it became a concern to the Mormon hierarchy when Fundamentalists began claiming a revelation from deceased prophets in the LDS Church. To avoid its members and the world from being confused regarding the church position on this matter, the First Presidency issued a statement on June 17, 1933. “It is alleged that on September 26–27, 1886, President John Taylor received a revelation from the Lord, the purported text of which is given in publications circulated apparently by or at the instance of this same organization [Mormon fundamentalists]. As to this *pretended revelation* it should be said that the archives of the Church contain no such revelation; the archives contain no record of any such revelation, nor any evidence justifying a belief that any such revelation was ever given.”²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ Quinn, “LDS Church Authority,” 9–105.

²⁴⁸ Clark, ed, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 5:327; Drew Briney, *Apostles on Trial: Examining the Membership Trials of Apostles Taylor and Cowley* (Salt Lake City: Hindsight Publications, 2012), 107, 117; *Modern*

Today, the Church actively seeks to distance itself from the practice of polygamy. On its web site, the church states that "the standard doctrine of the church is monogamy" and that polygamy was a temporary exception to the rule.²⁴⁹

History shows nineteenth century Mormon homes as moral, religious, and hard working. Also, most Mormon women during that time period defended the practice of polygamy.²⁵⁰ For many people in today's society, the notion of sharing a husband is repugnant and distasteful. However, it is clear that many involved in plural marriage in nineteenth century Mormon America found the practice a very healthy, and tolerable way of life. Orson Pratt's religious education argument in favor of Celestial Marriage was persuasive and convincing to a Mormon audience.

The period between the 1890 Manifesto and the 1907 post-Smoot Senate hearings, was a time of gradual dissolution from the practice of polygamy. Joseph F. Smith, nephew of founder Joseph Smith, was apparently the "key holder" who caused the ultimate demise of polygamy with the threat of excommunication for members who continued its practice. However, Smith did it on his own terms, when he felt the Lord was ready to end it and not before. In his mind, he did it with a divine purpose, to save *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* from being destroyed by the U.S. Federal Government. Hindsight is obviously twenty-twenty because history tells us his plan was successful. For example, U. S. President Grover Cleveland pardoned

Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism, accessed on January 14, 2018.

<http://www.mormonfundamentalism.com/1886-revelation-importance>.

²⁴⁹ LDS News Room, "Polygamy." Accessed on Mar. 15, 2017. <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/topic/polygamy>. "Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none. . . . For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things." Jacob 2:27, 30 (Book of Mormon.)

²⁵⁰ Ostling, *Mormon America*, 70.

all polygamists incarcerated in prison because of this practice. Utah achieved statehood and the church continued to grow both in the United States and abroad.²⁵¹ Mormon Temple work for both the living and the dead increased as church property returned to church ownership and members emerged from nineteenth century persecution into an era of relative peace and prosperity. For all intents and purposes the LDS Church was now Monogamist as it entered Twentieth Century America.

Today, mainstream Mormonism rejects plural marriage in this life. In 1921, Heber J. Grant was challenged with polygamy when he referred to being frustrated over some who failed to follow his council to cease performing plural marriages. Grant explained publicly he “desire[d] to protect virtuous, noble, good girls who were being deceived and entrapped into doing what, under the law of God today and under the law of the land, is adultery . . .”²⁵² Apparently, the Church continued to be plagued by polygamy as late as 1974. President Spencer W. Kimball warned against being persuaded by “polygamy cults” who will lead one away from the true path. He added, “Remember the Lord brought an end to this program many decades ago through a prophet who proclaimed the revelation to the world.”²⁵³

²⁵¹ Joseph F. Smith, "Official Statement Sustained [Manifesto-2]", In *Conference Reports of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1904), accessed on March 31, 2018. <https://archive.org/details/conferencereport1904a/>. Contains President Joseph F. Smith's statement affirming Wilford Woodruff's 1890 declaration that Latter-day Saints are to 'refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.' President Smith's statement includes consequences not contained in President Woodruff's declaration: "If any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage, he will be deemed in transgression against the Church, and will be liable to be dealt with according to the rules and regulations thereof and excommunicated therefrom." Joseph F. Smith, "Official Statement", Conference Report April 1904, 75.

²⁵² Heber J. Grant, "Excommunicated for. . .Pretended Marriage [Polygamy]", Discourse, General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1921, 202.

²⁵³ Spencer W. Kimball, "God Will Not Be Mocked", Discourse, General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, October 1974,

To illustrate President Kimball's concern regarding continued plural marriages by members of his church, I will use the experience of an acquaintance, Alison Hubbard. Alison attended a Latter-day Saint ward with her family in Portland, Oregon. She met John Ray, a family friend from Church when she was eleven and he was a young married man. Ray was excommunicated after joining a Mormon fundamentalist group and began practicing polygamy. The group believed mainstream Mormonism strayed from God's "path" when they abandoned polygamy. The group-maintained authority from a revelation that they said was revealed to John Taylor who succeeded Brigham Young. The supposed revelation stated that polygamy would forever be practiced by God's people.²⁵⁴

Once converted, John Ray convinced Alison that polygamy was divine by studying Joseph Smith's revelation (*D&C* 132). Alison was age twenty-four when she accepted Ray's marriage proposal after serving a church mission to France. She dropped out of Brigham Young University (BYU) and moved to Pinesdale, Montana in the spring of 1972 without telling her parents. Alison married Ray in May 1973 becoming wife number ten. Alison contacted her parents notifying them of her relocation when she was pregnant with her son, Anson. After an unsuccessful attempt to get their daughter to leave Ray and polygamy, Alison's parents returned home without her. Soon after, Alison received a letter dated September 25, 1974 from her Montana ward advising her "a Bishop's Court was convened to try you for your membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Inasmuch as you did not appear in this court to

accessed October 28, 2017. www.lds.org/general-conference/1974/10/god-will-not-be-mocked.

²⁵⁴ James R. Clark, ed, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1935-51), 5:327; Briney, *Apostles on Trial*, 107, 117; Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism, accessed January 14, 2018. <http://www.mormonfundamentalism.com/1886-revelation-importance>; Quinn, "LDS Church Authority", 9-105.

defend yourself, action was taken and you were excommunicated from the said Church due to apostasy and your association with an apostate group.”²⁵⁵ The “key holder” at the time had not given Alison Hubbard permission to practice polygamy thus she suffered disciplinary action.

**Conclusion:
Justification for Deception: Lying for the Lord?**

Based on the written evidence, there were times throughout the LDS church’s history where leaders lied to the public for a reason they deemed worthy. This started at the beginning with Joseph Smith. Some early Mormons were taught polygamy by Joseph Smith. It was not practiced at that time, said Smith, because the Lord had not required it yet, but some day God’s people would be commanded to live the law of celestial marriage. Early convert and later disaffected leader Lyman Johnson said Smith taught him the doctrine in 1831, when he lived with his family in Hiram, Ohio. Mosiah Hancock stated that Smith taught his father, Levi Hancock, polygamy in 1832. The 1835 and 1844 versions of the church's Doctrine and

²⁵⁵ Alison [Call] Hubbard, interviewed by author, October 19, 2017, Lompoc, CA. She met me in my home for the interview. Alison was born in Oakland, CA on July 19, 1947. Her family moved to Portland, Oregon when Alison was two years old. We discussed the circumstances surrounding her experience in polygamy. It is unclear why Alison never received a letter from her Bishop notifying her of the upcoming disciplinary hearing. Bishop Caleb Stewart obtained a copy of each of the letters from church records in Salt Lake City. With Alison’s permission a copy of both letters is in my possession. Alison was told by Pinesdale polygamists it was common for Corvalis Bishop to send one letter giving the results of action taken at trial, without an initial letter notifying of upcoming discipline hearing. Church policy requires both letters be sent to the accused. LDS Handbook 1 (Stake Presidents and Bishops policy and instruction book). Alison became disillusioned with polygamy after two years. She moved with her son to Salt Lake City to be with Ray’s family under Rulon Allred. She was not in love and her husband who was absent frequently. Ray punished her for an unstated indiscretion by refusing to sleep with her to deny her another child. When she escaped, Alison left her son with her Aunt and returned home with her Uncle to gather her things. She fled polygamy quietly without notifying her husband and sister wives. She returned years later after Ray passed away and was surprised the group welcomed her. Alison returned to Mainstream Mormonism for a short time, but decided it was no longer for her. She had lost the faith of her youth.

Covenants prohibited polygamy and declared that monogamy was the only acceptable form of marriage.²⁵⁶

The doctrine authorizing plural marriage was finally published in the 1876 version of the LDS Church's Doctrine and Covenants.²⁵⁷ The revelation clearly endorses plural marriage as a divine principle in contrast to public statements of denial of the doctrine by Smith and other Mormon leaders during this period. It remained a secret for fear of reprisals and misunderstandings that can cause increased persecution by outsiders as well as insiders. Smith married multiple wives before, during and after the 1843 revelation.

In 1852 in Salt Lake City, Young had Apostle Orson Pratt publicly announce polygamy as a current practice in Mormon Theology. Non-Mormons, outside religious leaders, Mormon apostates and government officials all criticized and condemned the church in the strongest language. Nothing but government edict, imprisonment, and disenfranchisement along with a supposed command from God to cease the practice plural marriage would cause Mormons to abandon polygamy. Under these circumstances, Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto of 1890, which publicly discontinued plural marriage. However, under Woodruff, and subsequent administrations: Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith, some authorized Polygamist marriages to continue being performed privately. It is unclear when polygamy stopped in mainstream Mormonism, but it likely discontinued entirely during Joseph F. Smith's early administration. All three Presidents, Woodruff, Snow, and Joseph F. Smith, did as Mormon founder Joseph Smith had done before them. They denied publicly, what God commanded them to do privately.

²⁵⁶ JD, 13:192-193; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 31-32; Mosiah Hancock *Autobiography*, accessed February 15, 2018. www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/MHancock.html.

²⁵⁷ D&C, 132.

How can faithful Latter-day Saints negotiate this apparent discrepancy within the context of modern-day standards of honesty? The answer is quite simple, if we refer to Joseph Smith's logic taken from his letter on "Happiness" that is printed in his history. Smith posits that true happiness does not come unless one lives all the commandments of God. To live God's commandments, one must first learn them. Once learned, a person is under condemnation if they fail to follow the commandments. Next, Smith teaches his audience, "That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another." The implication is clear, polygamy is wrong under some circumstances, but right under other situations. For example, "God said, 'Thou shalt not kill;'²⁵⁸ at another time He said, 'Thou shalt utterly destroy.'"²⁵⁹

Smith continued, "Everything that God gives us is lawful and right."²⁶⁰ Other scripture seem to support Smith's logic, but some historians view these scriptures as contradictions in biblical moral law. For instance, the ancient prophet Abraham told the King of Egypt that Sarah, his wife, was his sister. Mormon scripture depicts that it was God who commanded Abraham to deceive the King, because the King would have killed Abraham in order to take Sarah for himself had Abraham told him the truth.²⁶¹ By following the commandment to "lie" or at least postpone "Thou Shalt not bear false witness,"²⁶² Abraham saved not only himself, but his posterity. And the promised blessings of God that Abraham's "seed shall be as the sand upon the seashore" was fulfilled. In other words, God's commandments take precedence over man's laws, including the prohibition of polygamy by the U.S. government.

²⁵⁸ Exod. 20:13 (AV).

²⁵⁹ Exod. 23:27 (AV); Deut. 7:2 (AV).

²⁶⁰ Smith, *HC*, 5:134-36.

²⁶¹ Abraham 2:22-25 (Pearl of Great Price); Gen. 20:1-7 (AV).

²⁶² Exod. 20:16 (AV).

Furthermore, some may accuse God of lying or breaking his own commandment. However, Mormon founder Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders might answer, “No! God is the law giver, therefore, he cannot break his own laws that he created.” To understand this dilemma, perhaps an illustration comparing secular government laws with the Great Universal Law Giver will help. The legislative branch of government enacts laws and has the power to rescind law according to changing circumstances. The Executive branch has authority to enforce the law. That can happen when an authorized law enforcement officer enforces basic rules of the road laws. When a motorist fails to stop at a red light at an intersection, a duly sworn peace officer has authority to cite the driver for violating that statute. The consequences for violating traffic statutes is adjudicated in front of an authorized Judge in court who determines the penalty for breaking the law. However, that same peace officer has authority to suspend law or post-pone the law under certain circumstances. The primary duty of a traffic enforcement officer is to ensure the safety of the motoring public notwithstanding existing external laws to the contrary.

Circumstances may change which cause an agent or officer under the direction of the legislature (the law giver) to change the law or override what normally would have been a violation of the law. One example might be that the agent/officer stops motorists at a green light at an intersection because it was unsafe for traffic to proceed down the road where a traffic accident or other traffic hazard is blocking the roadway. To allow the motoring public to proceed driving on the road, the officer would be jeopardizing the safety of the motorists. If the driver is disobedient to the agent’s command and proceeds through the green light, the officer has authority to cite the driver for disobeying a lawful order. Laws change depending on changing circumstances; an agent for the lawgiver has discretionary authority that may go against existing written law and removes consequences for violating the letter of the law.

Conversely, according to Mormonism, only God has the right to command and rescind laws for his kingdom and he does it through his “key holder”, the President of the Mormon Church. Therefore, all presidents of the Mormon Church are authorized agents of God. God delegates his authority to his “servants the prophets”²⁶³ to enact or rescind church doctrine and practices according to the circumstances in which his church finds itself. Church Presidents seek to follow God’s commands, but sometimes God’s law is at odds with secular law. When that happens, they are not breaking the law, or lying to cover it up, they simply post-pone the law or rescind it at the behest of the Great Law Giver of the Universe, God the Father.

Future of LDS Plural Marriage

There is precedence for Plural marriage in ancient and modern-day Mormon scripture. Moreover, not one church leader has ever denounced plural marriage as a “sin” in the eyes of God, unless it was deemed illegal under secular law or if God prohibited polygamy. In fact, some leaders predicted that polygamy would be reinstituted in the future, if not before, then during the millennium. Both Monogamy and Polygamy are two types of marriage systems approved by God in Mormon scripture. There is no other marriage relationship permitted in ancient or modern scripture. If polygamy is not re-instated in mortality as some believe, it certainly has potential to be reestablished at a post-apocalyptic date. Evidence of its legitimacy centers on Mormon doctrine and can be readily found in past, current, and future Mormon culture and scripture.

Furthermore, it should not surprise anyone that a few mainstream Mormons continue to struggle with marriage, since the concept of plural marriage is alive and well within Mormon Holy Writ. The fact that their beloved Prophet and founder, Joseph Smith, received a revelation restoring the biblical practice of polygamy begs the question whether polygamy will one day be

²⁶³ Amos 3:7 (AV) .

reinstated once government changes the laws on proper marital conduct. Any past doctrine that was once held sacred as polygamy was in this life and in heaven has potential for being reestablished. Changes in secular law regarding marriage status for Americans has already occurred. When the United States Supreme Court issued a decree that gay marriage is legal in all fifty states, they changed the definition of marriage. How can government extend the privilege of marriage to one minority group, gays and lesbians, while discriminating against another minority group, polygamists? Are they not equal under the law? The recent Supreme Court decision that redefined marriage between one man and one woman has opened the door to other marriage types. For instance, although the LDS Church was forced to abandon plural marriage among the living, they did not relinquish it in theory, in scripture, or in the eternities. When a Mormon man loses his spouse in death, he is permitted to marry another spouse in this life and in eternity. For all “intents and purposes”, the LDS church never stopped the practice of plural marriage, albeit, its effects are only felt in the afterlife.

To illustrate, I will use my friend, Caleb Stewart (a member of the Mormon church), as an example. A few years ago, his first wife, Kara, passed away leaving him with four children. In time, he remarried, Melinda Barlow, and was sealed for time and all eternity in a Mormon temple, as he was with his first wife. He now serves as a Mormon bishop with the expectation that he and his children will one day be reunited with his first wife as a family in the eternities along with his second wife and their two children and any more children born to them. In Mormon theology, Caleb will have two wives in eternity which increases his chances of receiving the promised blessings of Abraham, “eternal increase.” Several Latter-day Saint Prophets and Apostles have married second wives for time and eternity after their first wife

passed away including the current President, Russell M. Nelson. Polygamy is here to stay in Mormon theology, the only question, when will it return to standard church practice?

Considering the Supreme Court decision in 2015 allowing Gay marriage, it is conceivable that plural marriage will once again be reinstituted into Mainstream Mormonism. Ironically, the same government that closed the door on plural marriage has now opened the door wide enough for a “freight train” to enter. Moreover, Mormon leaders have predicted polygamy will once again be restored at some future date. For instance, Brigham Young once said the Church will be practicing polygamy during the Millennium, when Christ reigns upon the earth.²⁶⁴ Other leaders such as Apostle Bruce R. McConkie concur. He stated in his book *Mormon Doctrine* that “the holy practice [plural marriage] will commence again after the Second Coming of the Son of Man and the ushering in of the millennium.”²⁶⁵ Current LDS leaders are silent on the issue; but they have never denied the possibility.

Religious Education on LDS Marriage-Joseph Smith

The practice of polygamy was instituted in *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* in its early history. The Mormon founder, Joseph Smith, established a divine pattern of revelatory methods for teaching his congregants religious education on new and old religious doctrine, not the least of which were the teachings about plural marriage.²⁶⁶ The revelations came to his followers in the voice of God through Smith. Because the doctrine of polygamy was antithetical to American western culture, the practice was first taught in private to close associates of its founder. Next, as the doctrine began in practice, Smith was the example on how

²⁶⁴ John Cairncross, *After Polygamy was made a Sin: the social history of Christian polygamy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 181.

²⁶⁵ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 578; Janet Bennion, *Women of Principle: Female Networking in Contemporary Mormon Polygyny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 20.

²⁶⁶ D&C, 132.

his followers were to conduct themselves as polygamists. Many times, Smith had his associates assist him in the process. One method Smith used to introduce plural marriage was to have his plural wives assist him in persuading other women to enter eternal matrimony with him. At times, the first time a potential plural wife learned of the doctrine was when a proposal for marriage was made to her by either Smith or one of his plural wives. Romance had little to do with marriage.

In addition, the marriage was more about linking them to Joseph Smith in eternity, rather than in this life. Not only was canonized revelation established for all the church members to consider, but personal revelation directed at specific individuals got them to accept Smith's teachings on the subject. It made it difficult for identified persons within revelation to resist a marriage proposal for fear of the consequences of disobedience to God. Also, the promise of eternal life as dictated by the Lord's prophet if one entered polygamy was a hopeful religious education method as well. However, for this method to have any chance of success, the adherent must have their own revelatory experience on which to lean.

Students of Mormon plural marriage were already conditioned and prone to believe Smith was a Prophet of the living God. Absent the believer's spiritual conversion, it would have been a difficult proposition for any nineteenth century woman of puritan stock to enter a polygamous, let alone a polyandrous relationship. Moreover, others in Smith's flock relied heavily on revelation from him to know who was permitted to enter the practice. Another method of religious education was restrictions placed on individuals entering polygamy. Without permission from Smith, it was tantamount to adultery, the second worst sin in Mormondom (the first being murder). The threat of expulsion from the church which denied eternal life to an individual was a methodological tactic that was meant to keep tight control over temptation in

breaking the law of chastity. The only way Smith and his followers could enter polygamy was with authorization from the almighty. This authorization came in the voice of Smith, the key holder, “. . . whether by mine own voice” said God, “or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.”²⁶⁷ It was this methodology by which Smith justified his numerous denials of the existence of a practice that he was in the habit of living in secret. Others who entered polygamy initially followed suit. The education and practices of Polygamy must be kept in secret as taught and directed by Smith.

Teachings of Utah Polygamy: Brigham Young & Orson Pratt

Religious education on polygamous marriage continued in secret under the direction of Brigham Young. However, the religious education methodology changed under Brigham Young. Once in Utah, Young directed fellow Apostle Orson Pratt to give a public sermon announcing to the world the Mormon practice of polygamy. While the practice was no longer kept in secret, Young was now the “key holder” and the only one authorized by God to permit someone to enter polygamy. Like Smith, Young privately counseled members persuading them to practice plural marriage with an emphasis on the practicality. Smith taught the benefits of obtaining additional wives for the eternal world, which Young continued. However, he also taught how one should live their mortal life in plural marriage to prepare for eternity.

Marriage and divorce were a means to an end for Young. When one couple was unable to have more children, he persuaded them to divorce and married the wife off to a “righteous” polygamist. After the wife gave birth to two children, Young divorced that couple and re-married the first couple to avoid adultery and enable the couple to have more children for this life and the life to come. It is unclear how often Young proposed such nuanced marriages, but the fact he

²⁶⁷ D&C, 1:38.

could do it without the slightest ramifications from his followers tells us how profoundly Mormons believed he was in communication with God. Brigham Young had a profound impact upon religious education within the Mormon marriage system. Under the direction of Young, Orson Pratt participated in religious education on marriage with members by using a variety of practical arguments depicting polygamy as a superior method of marriage.

Pratt taught polygamy publicly for the first time from the pulpit during an 1852 church sermon. Aside from the teachings of Smith about the spiritual benefits of plural marriage as a divine institution evidenced from Smith's polygamy revelation, he also used ancient biblical precedence to convince his listeners. In addition, Pratt argued that the first and foremost reason God instituted polygamy was to "raise up seed unto him [God]." As a necessary requisite for eternal life, like obedience to any commands from God, polygamy must be practiced to be saved. Further, Pratt taught additional benefits to polygamy that Smith apparently did not teach his followers during his lifetime. For instance, Pratt reasoned that polygamy solved social ills by eliminating prostitution, that it increased economic wealth, increased a woman's independence and polygamous children were more intelligent. Also, Pratt posited a shortage of men born into the world necessitated the practice of polygamy. He used his rational reasoning to develop skills for public debate as one method of religious education to not only members, but non-members as well. For those who refused to see eternal benefits to polygamy, practical reasons seemed much more accessible to those living in the mundane world. Moreover, he was tasked with assignments to argue his case in periodicals, newspapers and other forums as a form of religious education about plural marriage. One might include Pratt himself as a method of religious education on plural marriage, since he became the "Apostle of Polygamy."²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 47.

Government persecution made living in polygamy untenable. The state threatened the Church with confiscation of money and property. Mormon men were threatened with incarceration and fines, while many were already serving prison terms. One religious education methodology in teaching members to stop polygamy was to use revelatory process as Mormon founder Joseph Smith did when he instituted the practice. The 1890 Manifesto was issued by the First Presidency as one effective method for the eventual demise of plural marriage. Although it was not immediate, the manifesto began the gradual process of ending polygamy in Mormon culture. Historically, most people recognize the 1890 manifesto as the document that ended polygamy for mainstream Mormons. Because polygamy continued in secret after 1890, rumors persisted of church sanctioned polygamy, which caused suspicion and mistrust from outsiders. The church leadership reverted to the days when Joseph Smith taught and practiced polygamy in secret, while denying its existence in public. This was a kind of religious education methodology in teaching the vast majority of members to cease additional plural marriages. It was only a few “worthy” close associates of the leadership that continued the practice.

Finally, in 1904 Joseph F. Smith taught the members by testifying before congress and the world that the Church has nothing to hide. All that was done related to polygamy by church authorities, according to Smith, was done in a way that was above reproach. To prove this to the members and the world, Smith issued the second manifesto threatening to excommunicate any member who continued to participate in polygamous marriages thereafter. Although it may seem like church leaders practiced deception, polygamy was a complex and sensitive religious sacred rite that deserves a rational explanation. Both during the introduction and cessation of plural marriage, the Mormon hierarchy acted in ways they believed was according to God’s command; government edicts took a necessary “back seat.” Mormons involved in religious education

through its leaders should learn from church history one paramount doctrine, following the Lord's mouth piece, the prophet, took precedence over all else.

Abbreviations

In citing works in the notes, short titles have generally been used. Works frequently cited have been identified by the following abbreviations:

<i>JD</i>	Journal of Discourses. 26 vols. Liverpool : F. D. and S. W. Richards, 1854-86.
D&C	Doctrine and Covenants, LDS Scripture Canon found at: https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament?lang=eng
USHS	Utah State Historical Society
<i>HC</i>	Smith, Joseph Jr. <i>History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints</i> , 7 vols. Edited by B.H. Roberts. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1980.

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Appendix A

"Happiness Is the Object and Design of Our Existence," Joseph Smith to Nancy Rigdon, circa 11 April 1842 (from *Sangamo Journal* [Springfield, Illinois], 19 August 1842)

[p.158]Happiness is the object and design of our existence, and will be the end thereof if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. But we cannot keep all the commandments without first knowing them, and we cannot expect to know all, or more than we now know unless we comply with or keep those we have already received. That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be and often is, right under another. God said thou shalt not kill,—at another time he said thou shalt utterly destroy. This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire. If we seek first the kingdom of God, all good things will be added. So with Solomon—first he asked wisdom, and God gave it him, and with it every desire of his heart, even things which may be considered abominable to all who do not understand the order of heaven only in part, but which, in reality were right, because God gave and sanctioned by special revelation. A parent may whip a child, and justly too, because he stole an apple; whereas, if the child had asked for the apple, and the parent had given it, the child would have eaten it with a better appetite, there would have been no stripes—all the pleasures of the apple would have been received, all the misery of stealing lost. This principle will justly apply to all of God's dealings with his children. Everything that God gives us is lawful and right, and 'tis proper that we should enjoy his gifts and blessings whenever and wherever he is disposed to bestow; but if we should seize upon these same blessings and enjoyments without law, without revelation, without commandment, those blessings and enjoyments would prove cursings and vexations in the [p.159]end, and we should have to go down in sorrow and wailings of everlasting regret. But in obedience there is joy and peace unspotted, unalloyed, and as God has designed our happiness, the happiness of all his creatures, he never has, he never will institute an ordinance, or give a commandment to his people that is not calculated in its nature to promote that happiness which he has designed, and which will not end in the greatest amount of good and glory to those who become the recipients of his laws and ordinances. Blessings offered, but rejected are no longer blessings, but become like the talent hid in the earth by the wicked and slothful servant—the proffered good returns of the giver, the blessing is bestowed on those who will receive, and occupy; for unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundantly; but unto him that hath not, or will not receive, shall be taken away that which he hath, or might have had.

"Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer.
Next day the fatal precedent may plead;
Thus on till wisdom is pushed out of time," Into eternity.

Our heavenly father is more liberal in his views, and boundless in his mercies and blessings, than we are ready to believe or receive, and at the same time is as terrible to the workers of iniquity, more awful in the executions of his punishments, and more ready to detect every false way than we are apt to suppose him to be. He will be enquired of by his children—he says ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find; but if ye will take that which is not your own, or which I have not given you, you shall be rewarded according to your deeds, but no good thing will I withhold from them who walk uprightly before me, and do my will in all things, who will listen to my voice, and to the voice of my servant whom I have sent, for I delight in those who seek diligently to know my precepts, and abide by the laws of my kingdom, for all things shall be made known unto them in mine own due time, and in the end they shall have joy.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ Marvin S. Hill, "Happiness Is the Object and Design of Our Existence," Joseph Smith to Nancy Rigdon, circa 11 April 1842, chap. 32 in *The Essential Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), accessed April 6, 2018, <http://signaturebookslibrary.org/essential-joseph-smith-32/>; John C. Bennet, "6th letter from Gen. Bennet; Joe Smith's letter to Miss Rigdon," *Sangamo Journal* (Springfield, Illinois), August 19, 1842, 2,

Appendix B

Document Transcript

[Joseph Smith Papers]

Nauvoo, July 12th, 1843.

Verily thus Saith the Lord, unto you, my Servent Joseph, that inasmuch as you have enquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I the Lord justified my Servents Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; as also Moses, David and Solomon, my Servents as touching the principle and doctrin of their having many wives, and concubines. Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter Therefore prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you, for all those, who have this law revealed unto them, must obey the Same, for behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant, and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant, and be permitted to enter into my glory; for all who will have a blessing at my hands, Shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing and the conditions thereof, as was instituted from before the foundation of the world; and as pertaining, to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law or he shall be damned Saith the Lord God. And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these, all covnants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connexions, associations or expectations that are not made and entered into and Sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise of him who is anointed both as well for time and for all eternity and that too most holy by Revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my Servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days and there is never but one on the earth at a time, on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood is conferred) are of no effect efficacy, virtue or force in and after the resurrection from the dead for all contracts that are not made unto this end, have an end when men are dead. Behold, mine house is a house of [p. 1] order Saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion. Will I accept of an offering, Saith the Lord, that is not made in my name, or will I receive at your hands, that which I have not appointed, and will I appoint unto you, Saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was? I am the Lord thy God and I give unto you this commandment that no man Shall come unto the Father but by me

accessed April 6, 2018. <http://idnc.library.illinois.edu/cgi-bin/illinois?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=SJO&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->; Smith, HC 5:134-36; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 537-40; Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 243-45.

or by my word which is my law Saith the Lord, and every thing that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men by thrones, or principalities or powers or things of name whatsoever they may be that are not by me or by my word Saith the Lord, Shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, Saith the Lord your God; For whatsoever things remaineth are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me, shall be shaken and destroyed. Therefore, if a man marry him a wife, in the world, and he marry her not by me, nor by <my> word; and he covenant with her, So long as he is in the world, and She with him, their covenant and marriage is not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world therefore they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world therefore, when they are out of the world, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering Servents to minister for those, who are worthy of a far more and an exceding and an eternal weight of Glory, for these angels did not abide my law, therefore they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and Singly without exaltation in their Saved condition to all eternity and from henceforth are not Gods, but are angels of God for ever and ever.

And again verily I Say unto you, if a man Marry a wife and make a covenant with her for time and for all eternity, if that covenant is not by me or by my word which is my law and is not Sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power then it is not valid, neither of force when they are out of the world [p. 2] because they are not joined by me Saith the Lord, neither by my word when they are out of the world it cannot be received ~~there~~ there because the angels and the Gods are appointed there, by whom they Cannot pass, they cannot therefore inherit my glory for my house is a house of order Saith the Lord God, And again verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant and it is Sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise by him who is anointed unto whom I have appointed this power, and the keys of this priesthood and it Shall be Said unto them ye Shall come forth in the first resurrection and if it be after the first resurrection in the next resurrection and Shall inherit thrones kingdoms principalities and powers dominions all height and depths then Shall it be written in the Lambs book of life that he Shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood and if ye abide in my Covenant and commit no murder whereby to Shed innocent blood it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my Servent hath put upon them, in time and through all Eternity, and Shall be of full force when they are out of the world and they Shall pass by the angels and the Gods which are set there to their exaltation and glory in all things as hath been Sealed upon their heads which glory Shall be a fullness and a continuation of the Seeds for ever and ever. Then Shall they be Gods, because they have no end. Therefore, Shall they be from everlasting to everlasting because they continue Then Shall they be above all because all things are subject unto them Then Shall they

be Gods because they have all power and the angels are subject unto them Verily verily, I say unto you except ye abide my Law ye cannot attain to this Glory, for Strait is the Gate and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives and few there be that find it because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me. But if ye receive me in the world, then Shall ye know me, and Shall receive your exaltation, that where I am, ye Shall be also. This is Eternal lives to <know> the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath Sent, I am he Receive ye therefore my [p. 3] law. Broad is the gate, and wide the way that leadeth to the deaths, and many there are that go in thereat because they receive me not, neither do they abide my law— Verily verily I Say unto you, if <a> man marry a wife according to my word, and they are Sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment, and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever and all manner of blasphemies and if they commit no murder, wherein they Shed innocent blood yet they Shall come forth in the first resurrection and enter into their— exaltation but they Shall be destroyed in in the flesh and Shall be delivered unto the buffetin[g]s of Satan unto the day of redemption Saith the Lord God. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which Shall not be forgiven in the world nor out of the world, is in that ye Commit murder, wherein ye Shed innocent blood and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant Saith the Lord God and he that abideth not this law can in no wise enter into my glory but Shall be damned Saith the Lord, I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the Law of my Holy priesthood as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was, Abraham receiveth all things, whatsoever he received by Revelation and Commandment by my word Saith the Lord, and hath entered in to his exaltation and Setteth upon his throne, Abraham received promises concerning his Seed, and of the fruit of his loins from whose loins ye are viz; my Servant Joseph which were to continue so long as they were in the world, and as touching Abraham and his Seed out of the world they Should continue both in the world and out of the world Should they continue as innumerable as the Stars or if ye were to count the Sand upon the sea shore ye could not number them. This promis is yours also because ye are of Abraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham and by this law are the continuation of the works of my Father where in he gloryfieth himself, Go ye therefore and do the works of Abraham, enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved, But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promises of my Father which he made unto [p. 4] Abraham, God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. and why did she do it? Because this was the law, and from Hagar Sprang many people. This Therefore was fulfilling, among other things, the promises Was Abraham therefore under condemnation? Verily I Say unto you nay for I the Lorde Commanded it. Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac; nevertheless it was written thou Shalt not kill Abraham however did not refuse and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, Abraham received Concubines, and they

bare him children, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness because they were Given unto him. and he abode in my law as Isaac also, and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded they have entered into their exaltation according to the promises, and Sit upon thrones; and are not angels but are Gods. David also receiveth many wives and concubines and also Solomon and Moses my Servants; as also many others of my Servants from the beginning of creation until this time and in nothing did they Sin Save in those things which they received not of me. Davids wives and concubines were given unto him of me by the hand of Nathan my Servant and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he Sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife and therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation and received his portion and he Shall not inherit them out of the world for I gave them unto another Saith the Lord, I am the Lord, thy God and I gave unto thee my Servant Joseph an appointment and restore all things ask what ye will and it Shall be given unto you according to my word and as ye have asked Concerning adultery Verily verily I Say unto you if a man receiveth a wife in the new and Everlasting covenant and if She be with another man and I have not appointed unto her by the holy anointing She hath committed adultery and Shall be destroyed. If She be not in the new and everlasting covenant, and She be with another <man> she has committed adultery; and if her husband be with another woman and he was under a vow, he hath broken his vow and [p. 5] hath committed adultery and if she hath not committed adultery but <is> innocent and hath not broken her vow and She knoweth it and I reveal it unto you my Servant Joseph then Shall you have power by the power of my Holy priesthood to take her and give her unto him that hath not committed adultery but hath been faithful for he Shall be made ruler over many for I have conferred upon you the keys and power of the priesthood wherein I restore all things and make known unto you all things in due time— And Verily verily I say unto you, as whatsoever you seal on earth Shall be Sealed in heaven, and whatsoever you bind on earth in my name and by my word Saith the Lord it Shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and ~~whosoever~~ whosoever Sins you remit on earth, Shall be remitted eternally in the heavens and whosoever Sins you retain on earth Shall be retained in heaven——

And again Verily I say, whomsoever you bless I will bless and whomsoever you curse I will curse Saith the Lord for I the Lord am thy God

And again Verily I Say unto you my Servant Joseph that whatsoever you give on earth and to whomsoever you give any one on earth by my word, and according to my law, it Shall be visited with blessings and not cursings and with my power Saith the Lord, and Shall be without condemnation on earth and in heaven; for I am the Lord thy God and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all Eternity. For verily I seal upon you your exaltation and prepare a throne for you in the

Kingdom of my Father, with Abraham Your Father. Behold I have seen your sacrifices and will forgive all your Sins I have seen your sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you, Go therefore and I make a way for your escape, as I accepted the offering of Abraham, of his Son Isaac. Verily I say unto you a commandment I give unto mine handmaid Emma Smith your wife whom I have given unto you, that she stay herself and partake not of that which I Commanded you to offer unto her [p. 6] For I did it saith the Lord to prove you all as I did Abraham, and that I might require an offering at your hand by covenant and sacrifice and let mine handmaid Emma Smith receive all those that have been given unto my Servent Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; And those who are not pure <and have Said they ware pure> Shall be destroyed saith the Lord God, For I am the Lord thy God and ye shall obey my voice; and I give unto my Servent Joseph that he Shall be made ruler over many things for he hath been faithfull over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him, and I command mine handmaid Emma Smith to abide and cleave unto my Servent Joseph; and to none else, But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed saith the Lord, for I am the Lord thy God, and will distroy her if she abide not in my law, but if she will not abide this Commandment, then Shall my servent Joseph do all things for her even as he hath said and I will bless him and multiply him and give unto him an hundred fold in this world of ~~fathers, and~~ fathers and mothers brothers and sisters houses and lands wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds. And again, verily I say ~~unto you~~ let mine handmaid forgive my Servent Joseph his trespasses and ~~than~~ then Shall she be forgiven her trespasses wherein she hath trespaseeth against me and I the Lord thy God will bless her and multiply her and make her heart to rejoice. and again I Say let not my Servant Joseph put his property out of his hands, list an enemy come and distroy him for Satan Seeketh to distroy, For I am the Lord thy God, and he is my Servent and behold and lo, I am with him as I was with Abraham thy Father, even unto his exaltation and Glory, Now as t[o]uching the law of the priesthood there are many things pertaning thereunto. Verily if a man be called of my Father as was Aaron by mine own voice and by the voice of him that Sent me, and I have endowed him with the keys of the power of this priesthood, if he do any thing in my name [p. 7] and according to my law and by my word he will not commit sin and I will justify him, Let no one therefore Set on my servant Joseph for I will justify him for he shall do the sacrifices which I require at his hands, for his transgressions Saith the Lord your God & again, as pertaining to the Law of the priesthood if any man espouse a virgin, & desire to espouse another and the first give her [2 words

illegible] if he [*3 words illegible*]& they are virgins, & have vowed to no other man, then is he justified, he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him for he Cannot Commit adultery with that, that belongeth unto him & to none else & if he have ten virgins given <unto> him by ~~thee~~ this Law, he Cannot Commit adultery for they belong to him, & they are given unto him therefore, <is he justified> But if one or either of the ten virgins, after she is espoused Shall be with another man She has Committed adultery & shall be distroyed; for they are given unto him to multiply & replenish the earth according to my commandment & to fulfil the promise which was given by my father before the foundation of the world & for thine exaltation in the eternal worlds that they may ~~have~~ <bear> the Souls of men, for herein is the work of my father continued that he may be Glorified— And again verily, verily I say unto you if any man have a wife who holds the keys of this power & he teaches unto her the Law of my priesthood as pertaining to these things then Shall She believe & administer unto him or She Shall be distroyed Saith the Lord your God, for I will distroy her for I will magnify my name upon all these who receive & abide in my law. Therefore it Shall be lawful in me, if She receive not this law for him to receive all things whatsoever. I the lord his God will give unto him, because She did not believe & administer unto him according to my word, & She then becomes the transgressor & he is exempt from the law of Sarah who adminesterd unto Abraham according to the law, when I Commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife & now as pertain[in]g to this law verily verily I Say unto you I will reveal more unto you hereafter, therefore let this Suffice for the present. Behold, I am Alpha & Omega Amen [p. 8].²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ Document Transcript of revelation on marriage, Joseph Smith Papers Nauvoo, July 12, 1843, accessed April 6, 2018. www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-12-july-1843-dc-132/1#full-transcript.

Appendix C

PRESIDENT WOODRUFF'S
MANIFESTO.PROCEEDINGS AT THE SEMI-ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Monday Forenoon, October 6, 1890.

To Whom It May Concern:

Press dispatches having been sent for political purposes, from Salt Lake City, which have been widely published, to the effect that the Utah Commission, in their recent report to the Secretary of the Interior, allege that plural marriages are still being solemnized and that forty or more such marriages have been contracted in Utah since last June or during the past year, also that in public discourses the leaders of the Church have taught, encouraged and urged the continuance of the practice of polygamy—

I, therefore, as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, do hereby, in the most solemn manner, declare that these charges are false. We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice, and I deny that either forty or any other number of plural marriages have during that period been solemnized in our Temples or in any other place in the Territory.

One case has been reported, in which the parties allege that the marriage was performed in the Endowment House, in Salt Lake City, in the Spring of 1889, but I have not been able to learn who performed the ceremony; whatever was done in this matter was without my knowledge. In consequence of this alleged occurrence the Endowment House was, by my instructions, taken down without delay.

Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise.

There is nothing in my teachings to the Church or in those of my associates, during the time specified, which can be reasonably construed to inculcate or encourage polygamy; and when any Elder of the Church has used language which appeared to convey any such teaching, he has been promptly reproofed. And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.

Wilford Woodruff

President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Lorenzo Snow offered the following:

“I move that, recognizing Wilford Woodruff as the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the only man on the earth at the present time who holds the keys of the sealing ordinances, we consider him fully authorized by virtue of his position to issue the Manifesto which has been read in our hearing, and which is dated September 24th, 1890, and that as a Church in General Conference assembled, we accept his declaration concerning plural marriages as authoritative and binding.”

Salt Lake City, Utah, October 6, 1890.²⁷¹

²⁷¹ Wilford Woodruff, *Official Declaration terminated the LDS practice of plural marriage. Excerpts from Address by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto: Sixty-first Semiannual General Conference of the Church, Monday, October 6, 1890, Salt Lake City, Utah. Reported in Deseret Evening News, October 11, 1890, p. 2. Accessed September 20, 2017. www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/od/1.*

Appendix D

1904 Statement by Joseph F. Smith [Manifesto-2]

President Joseph F. Smith said:

I am going to present a matter to you that is unusual and I do it because of a conviction which I feel that it is a proper thing for me to do. I have taken the liberty of having written down what I wish to present, in order that I may say to you the exact words which I would like to have conveyed to your ears, that I may not be misunderstood or misquoted. I present this to the conference for your action:

Official Statement

“Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have ben entered into contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff, of September 26, 1890, commonly called the Manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff and adopted by the Church at its general conference, October 6, 1890, which forbade any marriage violative of the law of the land; I, Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and “I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the Church and will be liable to be dealt with, according to the rules and regulations thereof, and excommunicated therefrom.

Joseph F. Smith,
President of the Church of Jesus Christ Of Latter-day Saints..."

President Francis M. Lyman presented the following resolution and moved its adoption:

Resolution of Endorsement

"Resolved that we, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in General Conference assembled, hereby approve and endorse the statement and declaration of President Joseph F. Smith, just made to this Conference concerning plural marriages, and will support the courts of the Church in the enforcement thereof..."

The resolution was then adopted, by unanimous vote of the Conference...²⁷²

²⁷² Joseph F. Smith, "Official Statement Sustained [Manifesto-2]", In *Conference Reports of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1904), 75, accessed March 31, 2018. <https://archive.org/details/conferencereport1904a/>.